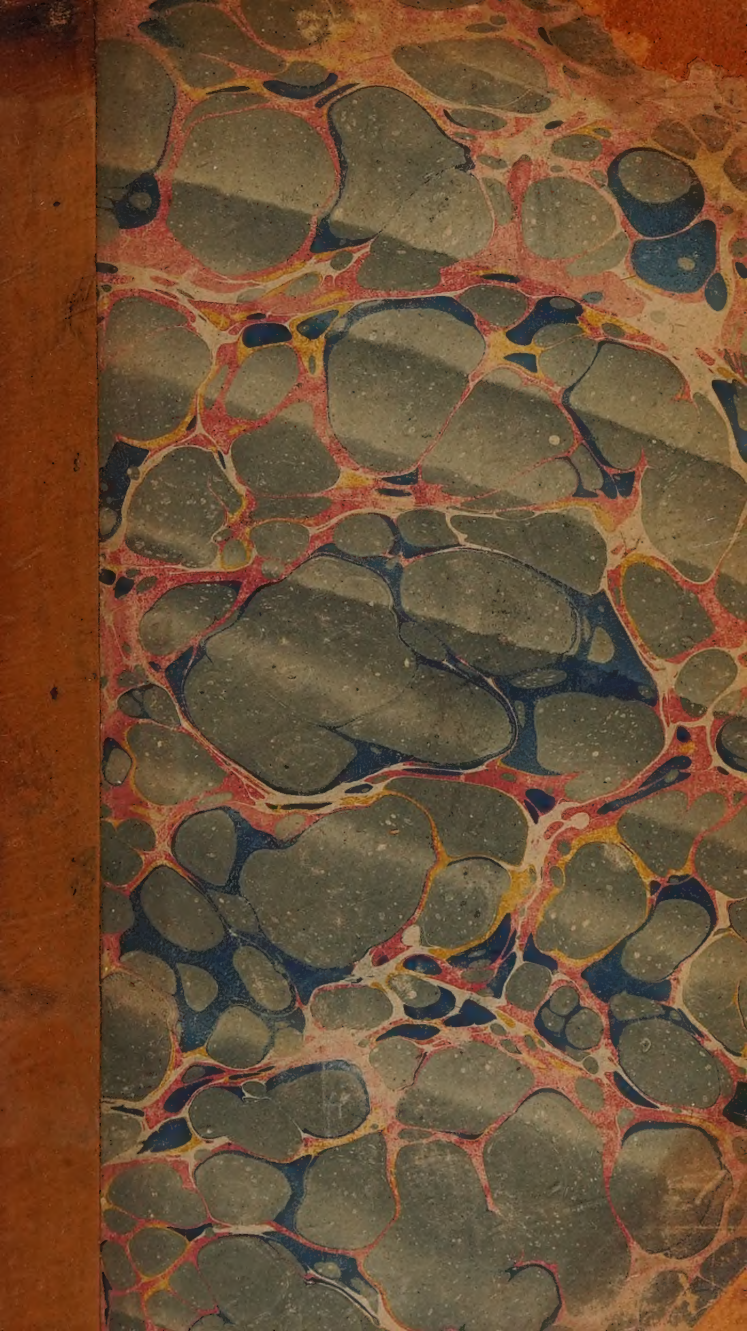




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7. Voice of the P. E. Church in the
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1.

A

PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE

CLERGY AND LAITY

OF HIS DIOCESE,

BY THE

RT. REV. L. SILLIMAN IVES, D. D.

BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA.

NEW-YORK:
STANFORD AND SWORDS, 137, BROADWAY.

1849.

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PASTORAL LETTER.

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH
CAROLINA.

DEAR BRETHREN—You were doubtless surprised, that I should so far seem to suspect your confidence in my fidelity to our branch of the one Catholic Church, as during the sitting of the late Convention at Salisbury, to think it necessary to give you assurances of such fidelity, in the form of a charge to the clergy. I am aware, had you been duly represented,* there would have been as little demand for such assurances, as there was ground for requiring them; and the only apology I can offer you for so humiliating an act, may be found in the desire, I have always cherished, to shield you from harm at any sacrifice of mere personal feeling or right. Besides the circumstances under which I acted should not be overlooked. I was confined to my bed by severe illness, not admitting of my writing or even *thinking* intensely without danger to my life. While in this helpless state, I heard incidentally of some intended action in the convention in regard to my own views and teaching. So extraordinary a proceeding I could hardly credit. Still I felt it to be my duty to have

* Out of 48 parishes assessed in the diocese, you will see by the Journal, only 13 marked as having been represented in convention.

some communication with that body, and with this view sent for two of my presbyters, to whom, after consultation, I consented to dictate the charge to which I have alluded, authorizing them, however, to present it to the clergy, only on the express condition, "that no resolution should be passed in the Convention implying its right, either directly or indirectly, to affirm what you, as a diocese hold, in regard to doctrine, discipline or worship; or what, in respect to these points, the clergy are bound to teach."

As the circumstances under which I dictated this charge forbade all explanation at the time, I expressed to my presbyters, my determination to address you, on this subject, so soon as God should give me strength to do it. Which determination was by no means relaxed, on finding the condition I had imposed wholly disregarded, and my act much misunderstood, as a yielding of those principles, which I hold most sacred, and a due carrying out of which, I believe to be essentially indented with the welfare of the souls committed to my trust.

Had I nothing, Dear Brethren, but my own interest and honor to consult, I should here lay down my pen, and yielding to the strong impulse of my heart, offer humble and devout thanksgiving to God for most undeserved blessings, for your great forbearance and exemplary kindness to me for nearly twenty years of very imperfect and unworthy, though well intentioned services. As a man I have nothing to utter but thanks, and nothing to ask, but your earnest prayers to God for the pardon of my many sins, and for His grace and strength to bear me up under the heavy burden of my duties and responsibilities, that I may stand the severe trial of this day, which is showing with an awful distinctness, "who are His, and who is holy." But I bear to you another relation. I have "the rule over you" by divine commission, and must give account for your souls at

the day of judgment. I was, without my seeking, made your Bishop. God empowered me, and exacted of me a solemn vow, to "teach and exhort you, to withstand gainsayers, and to use all diligence to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine." Therefore I now speak to you, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and I entreat you for Christ's sake and for your soul's sake to give heed to my words. My motive (God knoweth,) is a humble desire to glorify Him, and keep you in the way of truth, unto eternal life. If, in what I have to say, I may seem to touch unnecessarily upon some small things, it is because of their relation to great ones; or may seem to reflect upon individuals, it is for the defence and protection of the diocese. Great and essential principles are often involved, in what might otherwise appear, unimportant acts.

I.

Hence I must be allowed, in the first place, to bring to your notice what I conceive to be the errors of principle, in the first document on the page of the Journal—the report on the state of the Church, which introduces the subject of *excitement* in the diocese. The words of the report are, "the committee deplore the existence, among the members of the Church, of *great agitation and alarm*, arising from the impression, that doctrines have been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of the Church," &c. Now, from the manner in which this assertion is put forth, it is to be presumed, that the committee meant to be understood as affirming the existence *generally* in the diocese, of this "great agitation and alarm." But upon what *testimony*, I would ask, is this assertion made? The only testimony which the diocese in her canons allows, in such a case, is "a *written* account of the state of

each parish, given by its minister, in his parochial report." The 5th canon says, "that it *shall be the duty* of each minister to report annually to the bishop"—among other things—"a WRITTEN account of the *state of the parish*. Which reports shall be, by the bishop, communicated to the convention, and read in their presence, *in order to promote a general knowledge of the state of the Church*." These reports, on the occasion referred to, were handed to the bishop, and by him communicated to the convention. And, according to our canon law, they contain all the *testimony* in respect to the state of the Church, in the diocese, or any portion of it, which is either legal or trustworthy. I call upon the Church, in the diocese, and throughout the union, to examine these parochial reports, and discover, if possible, any "account" or evidence, from the only persons allowed by canon to testify—viz: the parochial clergy and the bishop—of "great agitation and alarm," either in the diocese, or *any one* parish in the diocese! To say that there *is* such "agitation and alarm," when the parochial clergy, to a man, are silent on the subject, is to say, that they have been culpably negligent in a canonically prescribed and commanded duty.

II.

The next thing to be noticed, is the alleged *ground* of this "agitation and alarm"—which, to use the words of the report, consists "in the impression that doctrines have been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of this Church, and that ceremonies and practices have been introduced, either unauthorized by the customs of this Church, or in plain violation of its rubrics." It is true, the committee decline either to affirm or deny the existence of these things, on the ground that "it is *not their business*." But if it be not their business to inquire into the fact of their existence,

by what authority do they touch them at all? And more than this; by what authority do they indirectly define them and assert their existence in an attempted exculpation of "*the far greater part of the clergy*," and hence, in an implied charge of guilt against the minority of the clergy, embracing the Bishop of the Diocese? For how can the committee know that the greater part of the clergy are entirely opposed to certain things, except as they define them, and hence give them existence? I agree with the committee, that it "*was no business of theirs*" to determine, whether or not the matters charged upon a portion of the clergy were founded in fact. But I must be permitted to go further, and affirm, that (if possible) it was still less their business to pass an implied, but not, on that account, the less oppressive censure upon that portion, with the Bishop at their head. I say the Bishop—for it is useless to reply that he was not named, since it is notorious, that both in the Convention and the committee, he *was* named as the chief offender. And now, brethren, consider the circumstances under which this was done. The Church, at large, have a right to suppose, that this was an extreme measure, resorted to after every canonical means had failed; while the truth is, no canonical *means had been tried*. No expostulation with the Bishop by the clerical members of the standing committee, nor by any other body of the clergy. No charges laid before him against any priest or deacon, as teaching heretical doctrine, or practicing forbidden things. No complaint by any rector that he had been annoyed by the practices of any neighboring priest, nor from any layman, against those of his pastor. No word, save in one solitary instance of friendly counsel on the subject, except as sought by the Bishop himself, from any clergyman or layman in the diocese. But, after a quiet and apparently profitable

visitation throughout the low country, in which all his sermons, which are now said to have produced excitement, were preached, with the almost universally avowed approbation* of clergy and laity, the Bishop finds himself virtually arraigned for his teaching by a convention assembled in a remote part of his diocese—called with no general knowledge of the intention of a few alarmists, representing only thirteen or fourteen parishes out of about fifty—having in it only nine clergymen out of forty, and six laymen out of the whole representation, who had ever heard the sermons,† indirectly, but no less injuriously, referred to in the report of the committee.

Besides, if the teachings and practices of the Bishop and those who may sympathize with him, had been of the character implied in the report, what evidence had the far greater part of the clergy‡ given of their peculiar and exemplary fidelity? The false teaching or irregularity supposed, in order to produce such “great agitation and alarm,” must have been both *known* to these clergymen, and very *dreadful* in itself. Where is the evidence of their manly and canonical resistance? The conclusion,

* The rector of one of our largest parishes, and a member of the committee, as I was about to leave, after having delivered my course of sermons, called with members of his vestry, and said to me these words—“Bishop, we had, before your visitation, heard much of your *popery*; but all I can say is, that I hope you will be able soon to return and give us as much more as you please of the *same kind*!” To which his vestry present seemed to yield a hearty assent. Many more like conversations, if needful, I might relate, with only one, and that a sufficiently notorious exception.

† I feel bound to state, that the lay delegates from all the old parishes, who had heard the sermons, and were accustomed to represent the convention, were, except in two instances, utterly opposed to the whole Salisbury proceeding.

‡ I do by no means intend here to sanction the idea, that the far greater part of the clergy, are opposed to my teaching. On the contrary, I doubt not, the “*greater part*” are *now* united with me. The differences are merely *nominal*.

in justice to them, is inevitable, that they believed these things either to have no real existence, or to come within that class of views and practices, about which clergymen may differ and still be faithful to the Church. But to these things as existing in North Carolina I shall recur in the sequel.

III.

I now come to the consideration of that, which, in my humble judgment, may well excite "*alarm*" in the breast of every true son of the Church, as striking, in principle, at the very foundations of truth and order, as hitherto held and acted upon by this diocese—I mean the preamble of the *resolution* relating to the publication of the report on the state of the Church and the Bishop's charge.

I. In regard to the *matter* of this preamble, I shall say nothing;—whatever may be its merits or demerits, they are perfectly harmless. But of the principle involved in it, viz :—*the right of a convention to affirm what a diocese holds, or what the clergy may, or may not teach*, I am now called upon to speak. I protested against this principle, at the time, as strongly as my feeble state would allow; and had I been present in the convention, no such principle would have been sanctioned, for no resolution involving it would have been put to that body. And I am bound here to state, upon good authority, that, as it was, the clergy who were silent, and many who voted for the preamble, would have opposed its passage, had they not been under a wrong impression as to my real views of it. Be this as it may, I now renew my protest against the principle involved in it, as utterly subversive of the fundamental faith and polity of the Church. No convention, constituted as our conventions are, has a right to determine what is, or should be, the faith, or practice under the faith, of a diocese. That is determined by a

power far above it! What a Christian is to believe and do comes from God, and is imposed by His authority. So that every Christian, in every diocese and nation, and throughout the universal Church, is bound, *eo nomine*, to believe and do, if he would save his soul, that which God hath enjoined. And hence, all are bound to believe and do essentially the same things, as they are all commanded to be of "one heart and mind, and one mouth in glorifying God and striving together for the faith of the Gospel." But, as from the character of the human mind, and the effects of sin, Christians are not able to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," by the rule of individual judgment, God hath made His Church—"His One Catholic and Apostolic Church," "the *pillar* and *ground* of the Truth;" made this Church, in her character as *universal*, or, "one body in Christ"—the interpreter and judge, for every individual, and every diocese, and every integral portion of His body. And hence the presence of Christ personally, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, is promised, through the apostles, to the *universal Church*, or to His body as *one*—and to each portion and member of that body, only as it continues in the faith, and order, and sacraments, adjudged and declared by the whole to have been received from God.* It is true, we have *power* to depart from thence, just as we have power to commit any other sin. But we have no right, and if we would attain eternal life, *we must not do it*. The principle here laid down is the one upon which the English Reformers placed themselves in justifying their resistance to Rome.† They held to the absolute ne-

* "Amidst so great perplexity of such various error," says Bishop Ravenscroft, "it is *extremely necessary* that the line of prophetic and apostolic interpretation be regulated by the *standard of ecclesiastical and catholic judgment*." Vol. I. p. 173.

† "I affirm," says Bishop Ravenscroft, "and *shall make it good*,

cessity of yielding to the voice of the Church so long as she gave her judgment in general councils, which was, at least, up to the sixth century. And they argued the necessity of breaking away from the usurpations of Rome, on the ground that Rome had been guilty of an essential departure from the truth of God, as fixed and enforced by the judgment of the Catholic or universal Church. And when they set forth the Book of Common Prayer, they justified the act, on the ground that it was in accordance with this same judgment. This is seen, not only in the language of the royal commission, authorizing the compilation of the Prayer Book, but also in the words of its Preface. “Different *forms and usages* may, without offence, be allowed, PROVIDED *the substance* of the FAITH *be kept* ENTIRE; and what cannot be clearly determined to *belong to doctrine, may be altered,*” &c. From which it is clear that the Reformers considered it necessary to keep *the substance of the faith entire*, as settled by the universal Church; and hence, to allow of no alteration in anything belonging to doctrine; such alteration having the nature of heresy. Any national Church, therefore, which should presume to deny any ancient Catholic creed, or leave out any article of such a creed, would, ipso facto, cut itself off from the body of Christ. It was on this principle that the English bishops refused the Episcopacy to the American Church, till they had restored to the Apostle’s

that this rule, either expressly in terms, or virtually in its principles, was the *actual basis* of the Reformation, inasmuch as *antiquity, universality, and consent*, were the *tests* by which the Reformers, everywhere, were determined both as to *corruptions* and *reforms*.” P. 357. And he does “*make it good.*” See *how* in his citations from BISHOPS RIDLEY, JEWEL, OVERALL, HALL, BEVERIDGE, and BULL, with DRS. HAMMOND, MEDE, and others. P. 359 to 364.

See also the evidence of this, ably presented in a pamphlet of Dr. Hook’s, on the subject; and more feebly, in the sermon preached by the author, at the consecration of the Assistant Bishop of Virginia.

Creed, the article on "the descent into hell," which the *Reviewers* of the Prayer Book *had left out*; and further, till a solemn assurance was given to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that, in omitting the Athanasian Creed, and in the other omissions in our Liturgy, no "*essential departure*" was designed from the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the English Church." Hence, the Athanasian creed is virtually as binding upon the American Church as upon the English; so that any member of that Church who should deny the truth of that creed, or any article of it, would, thereby, become a heretic. On this same principle, viz.: that the judgment of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, in regard to faith, and order, and sacraments, is the ultimate standard for all Christians, it is, that whatever, in the way of doctrine, is set forth by any national Church for the protection or illustration of truth, must be held subservient to such judgment, and be understood in consistency with it.* There is no middle way between this and the merest *private judgment*, or "the doing that which is right in one's own eyes," a thing directly forbidden by Almighty God.

From this, it must be manifest to all, that a *diocese* does not *determine* its own faith, but comes under the necessity, by *becoming a diocese*, to believe and do certain things already determined for it by Almighty God, as authoritatively set forth by the Universal Church, and conveyed to it by the national Church, and that it has no power to alter, to modify, or, in any way, to impair the force of the things thus to be believed and done.

* Bishop RAVENSCROFT quotes the following from CHILLINGWORTH, with approbation of it. Holy Scripture "*is not a judge of controversies, but a rule to judge them by:*" and that not an *absolutely perfect* rule; but as perfect as a WRITTEN rule can be, which must always need something else, which is evidently true, or evidently credible, to give illustration to it; and that in this case is *universal tradition*. So THAT UNIVERSAL TRADITION IS THE RULE TO JUDGE ALL CONTROVERSIES BY." P. 374.

II. It is true, there is a power in a diocese to explain and enforce these things—to show the ground upon which they stand—the channel of divine authority by which they are handed down to us, and made binding upon us,—to bring them out from the obscurity of private and sectarian novelty, into the clear light of primitive authority, that their divine beauty may be seen, their reality acknowledged, and their saving benefits felt.

And this power, in a diocese, is entrusted solely to that sacred instrumentality to whom God hath committed the ministry of reconciliation. “He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That henceforth we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ.” Here then, in words directly from God, which the Church has ever applied to the holy ministry, that ministry is set forth as the sole teacher, edifier, external bond of union, and shield of defence, of the faithful in Christ Jesus.

III. In submission to this divine arrangement, our branch of the Catholic Church, hath, after affirming that, from Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, it is evident unto all that the holy ministry, since the days of the apostles, has consisted of three orders, bishops, priests, and deacons—declared, that “to the intent that those orders may be continued, and *reverently used and esteemed* in this Church, no man shall be ac-

counted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest or deacon in this Church, *or suffered to execute any of the said functions*,* except he be called, tried, examined, and hath had Episcopal consecration or ordination." Now what can more effectually than do these words, restrict to this holy ministry, all teaching, admonishing, edifying, and spiritual judgment and oversight? Hence, in pursuance of this principle, all who are admitted to any function in this ministry are placed under the most solemn vows, according to their respective orders, to conform, in their teaching and ruling, to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. While no person, not admitted to this ministry, is placed under any vow, whatever, touching these things. Besides, the Church, in her national and diocesan Conventions, has generally guarded this principle, by not allowing any layman to act, in any case, except in a subordinate way, where any question of doctrine, discipline, and worship, or any question implying spiritual oversight, such as relates to "the state of the Church," is likely to arise. Hence, in all standing committees, the clerical members alone are allowed to counsel with the bishop, in determining the theological qualifications of candidates for holy orders, or in reference to other spiritual matters, while the clergy only are authorized to act in cases of discipline and in committees "on the state of the Church."

IV. More than all this, the clergy alone are made

* Bishop Hobart, in the following words, gives a summary of these "functions." "The apostles and their *successors*, therefore, were commissioned to promulgate the terms of salvation, to teach and enforce its *doctrines and duties*. They were also commissioned to *intercede for* and *bless the people*, and to *present*, in the *Holy Eucharist*, the commemorative sacrifice of the death of Christ. *They were further commissioned to govern the Church, to admit into and to exclude from its communion, to ENACT its LAWS, and to administer its discipline.* And *this authority would be transmitted to the Church, alway, even to the end of the world.*"—*Com. to Altar*, p. 195.

responsible for any departure from the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. Sad as may be the truth, it nevertheless is the truth, *that we have no law that can justify us in placing laymen under discipline for heresy.* They may be, and I know are, in a large majority of cases, constrained by the power of conscience. But there is no other power, in cases of false doctrine or heresy, that we can call into exercise to control or rebuke them. They may be Socinians, Universalists, or any thing else you can name, if, in a *moral sense*, they be not open and notorious evil doers, or have not done any wrong to their neighbor by word or deed—there is no canonical right, except we go beyond the canon law of the American Church, to which some desire to restrict us, even to repel them from the Holy Communion. In this view of the matter, (and it is the true view,) we may see, if we will, that the only security to the clergy, yea, to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church, is found in her wise provision, which precludes the judgment of the laity from all questions involving these things; a provision, flowing from her safe maxim, that *she gives no authority where she exacts no responsibility.*

As, therefore, in regard to a Diocesan Convention, as a *Convention*, the Church prescribes no duty, takes no pledge of fidelity, and exacts no responsibility, touching her doctrine, discipline and worship, but has done all this in respect to her clergy, no such convention *can*, without an unauthorized assumption of power and a dangerous invasion of clerical rights and functions, presume to say, what is held by any diocese, or what its clergy *may or may not teach*.*

* Bishop Ravenscroft cites the following from Bishop Overall, as in principle true. In a letter to Grotius, the Bishop, in regard to a book of the former, questions the correctness of certain passages “ which seemed to give to lay-powers a definite judgment in matters of faith ;

V. There is another aspect in which I am constrained to exhibit this important point. What constitutes a Diocese? Without doubt, baptized laymen, deacons and priests, with a bishop placed over them, and made accountable for them to the Church here, and to the Sovereign Judge hereafter. What constitutes, or may constitute, a Convention? Not only communicants, but also laymen unbaptized and non-communicants; in other words, persons who neglect or defer the fulfilment of their baptismal vows, with others who, though faithful members of Christ, are not responsible, so far as any provision of our Canons is concerned, to any one for what they believe and say in respect to doctrine, discipline, or worship. These, together with *deacons* and priests, *without a Bishop*, often make up a convention, and did make up the two last conventions of this diocese. And this body—(I mean no disrespect to them in their true capacity as men and clergymen)—this body *is to define and set forth the belief of a diocese! To publish their authoritative judgment* (I blush to be forced to say it, in North Carolina) *of what the Bishop and his clergy are to teach, and the people of the diocese must receive!* And suppose they should attempt to do it, what would their judgment be worth, to any bishop, priest or deacon, who has to give an account to God, by whose commission he acts; or to any layman, who, in submission to the command of God, would “obey them that have the rule over him,” and thus save his soul?

to deny the true power and jurisdiction of pastors of the Church, and to rank Episcopacy among unnecessary things. For our divines,” says he, “hold that the right of definite judgment in matters of faith is to be given to Synods of Bishops, and other *learned* ministers of the Church, *chosen and convened for this purpose*, according to the usage of the ancient Church; *who shall determine from Holy Scripture, explained by the consent of the ancient Church—not by the private spirit of heretics.*”

VI. But suppose the Bishop, or any of his clergy, teach false doctrine, or enforce unauthorized terms of communion, what is the remedy ?

In answering this question, I am compelled to touch upon that which I would most gladly have avoided, *my own authority as Bishop*. But the time has come which calls upon me to sacrifice all feelings of mere delicacy, and to raise my voice, though I may stand alone in my diocese, or in the American Church, against what I regard as an invasion of the powers entrusted to me, and to me *alone*, by Almighty God, for the spiritual government of this portion of His kingdom.

In self-defence, I am obliged to say I did not covet these powers, I did not seek them ; that in fact they were forced upon me against my will ; that I was taken from a quiet and happy sphere of duty, to which my heart fondly clung, and constrained by the providential circumstances * of my election to enter upon the arduous and awfully responsible duties of my present office. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, acting by commission from Almighty God through her Bishops placed me over this diocese, and made me alone † responsible to the Church at large for its “doctrine, discipline and worship.” To inspire me with vigilance and prompt me to vigorous action, she imposed upon me the most

* I was unanimously elected without any previous intimation of the intention of the diocese, after repeated unsuccessful trials to induce others to accept.

† “A Bishop” says Hooker “is a minister of God, unto whom, with permanent continuance, there is given not only power of administering the word and Sacraments, but also a further power to ordain ecclesiastical persons, and a power of *chiefly* in government over *presbyters as well as laymen*, a power to be by way of jurisdiction, a Pastor even to Pastors themselves So that this office, consisteth in those things which are common to other Pastors, as in ministering the word and Sacraments ; *but those things* incident to his office, which do properly make a Bishop, *cannot be common* unto him with other pastors.” Vol. ii. page 137.

stringent vows of fidelity : vows which bind me to answer to God and the Church, not only for myself, but for every Priest, Deacon, and baptised person within my jurisdiction. Such vows, as bind no other being in the diocese ; and exact of me an accountability to which no other being is made subject. Besides this, to enable me to fulfil my trust, she has endowed me, under God, as she hath endowed no other man or body of men in this diocese, with a *special gift of the Holy Ghost for my office and work* of overseer, and hath admonished me, to remember to stir up this gift, or “the grace of God given me by the imposition of hands,” reminding me, that God hath not thus given me the *spirit of fear* ; but of *power and love and soberness*.* Whatever man, therefore, or body of men, take upon themselves the power of dictation, or control, or under any form, the chief direction, in regard to the doctrine, discipline and worship of this diocese, or of any part of this diocese, are guilty of arrogating powers, committed solely to my hands, assuming a trust, for which I alone am made responsible, and resisting the authority of Christ, and the functions of the Holy Ghost with which I only am invested.

They do more than this, if they be clergymen—they violate their own solemn vows of fidelity and submission. Each and every priest and deacon, in the diocese, is put into his office by the bishop, makes his promise of fidelity to “the doctrines, discipline, and worship” of the Church, to the bishop ; vows obedience directly, and under the most awful circumstances, to the bishop ; and is made amenable to him, and to him alone,† for failure in duty, “error in religion, or for viciousness in life.” If any complaint is to be made, it must be made to the bishop—

* See the Office for the Consecration of a Bishop.

† Read the Office of Institution.

if any admonition be given, or punishment inflicted, it must be by the bishop. And all this is not left to be inferred, from the inherent powers of the bishop, but is fixed by the written law of the National Church.

We are here put in possession of the remedy, which the people have against unlawful teaching or practices of priests and deacons, and which they have against one another. If any communicant feels aggrieved under the discipline of the priest; or, if any vestryman shall be scandalised by his teaching or practices—or if any deacon shall have cause of offence against any priest, or any priest be offended with his brother, the way of redress is open by the law;—*the appeal is to the bishop*. And here let me remind you, brethren, that any other mode of reaching these evils, or attempting their cure, must be schismatical in its character, and utterly subversive of law and order in the Church.

And now we come to the final remedy, viz: that against the false teaching and unauthorized and oppressive discipline of a bishop. Aside from that confidential and friendly intercourse which should always subsist between a bishop and the clergy and laity of his diocese, (the influence of which may always be great and salutary,) there is recognized, by the spirit and laws of the Church, a right on the part of his priests to counsel with him, and if need be, expostulate with him, in reference to any matter relating to the soundness of the faith, or welfare of the diocese. And, finally, if, after this, he shall openly violate the laws of the Church, or teach heretical doctrines; or shall refuse to subject to godly discipline, those of his clergy who so do; then a convention of his diocese may present him for trial, to his peers—the bishops of the Church. But any attempt on the part of any one or number of his clergy to thwart his views, or embarrass his official labors, by combinations among

themselves,* or with the laity; or to intimidate and coerce him, by exciting against him the popular mind—lending a willing ear to exaggerated statements, and giving publicity to confidential, desultory, and unguarded conversations—and by aiding and abetting unauthorized, oppressive, and irresponsible conventional acts, is, if there be any virtue in principles, or force in vows, a direct violation of those ties of fellowship and sacred promises of obedience, with which every priest and every deacon, binds his conscience and his soul, at his ordination;—while it virtually annihilates the Episcopal office, exposes that of the priesthood to contempt, and infuses into the whole body of Christ, the elements of disorder, feebleness, and death.

Brethren, “I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, which are most *surely believed* among you; and to endeavor, moreover, that ye may be able, after my departure, to have them *always* in remembrance. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables.*”

IV.

At this point of my letter, dear brethren, I am forced back, however unwillingly, to a consideration of the *actual state of the diocese*. I do not claim

* In reference to this point, see an able pamphlet of the late Bishop Hobart, addressed to a clerical association in his diocese, just before his death, and received with almost universal applause throughout the Church. Mark, also, the following from the Apostolic Canons: “Let not the presbyters or deacons do any thing *without the sanction* of the bishop—for he it is, who is entrusted with the people of the Lord, and of whom will be required the account of their souls”—*Canon 39*.

Observe the warning from CHALCEDON “The crime of conspiracy,” says the 18th canon of that General Council, “or *banding together*, is utterly forbidden even by the civil laws; much more then, ought such a thing to be forbidden in the Church of God. If, therefore, any of the clergy should be discovered either conspiring or *banding together*, or forming any evil design against the bishop or their fellow clergy, let them be altogether deposed from their proper rank.”

an insight (this would be most hazardous in our day of sudden and marvellous changes) into the hearts of my people. But if I may be allowed to draw any conclusion from outward indications,—to “judge of the tree by its fruits,”—I should venture to affirm, that a greater increase of real earnestness and humility has followed the last year’s ministrations of the Church here, than those of any former like period in my Episcopate.

Of one thing I may speak confidently, viz.:—that the Church, in its accession of communicants, has made, during the past year, unusual progress among thoughtful and earnest dissenters.

But this beam of light which God hath sent down to cheer our hard labors, is sought to be intercepted by the clouds of human passion. The charge upon a portion of our self-denying ministry is, that through carelessness or wantonness, or some other cause, “doctrines have been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of the Church, and that ceremonies and practices have been introduced either unauthorized by the customs of this Church, or in plain violation of its rubrics.” This is a solemn charge, and requires from your Bishop a solemn answer. He has had it for nearly a month before his mind,—he has made all the inquiry concerning it which his circumstances would admit, and now, in view of that account to God for which the present state of his health warns him to make speedy preparation, he can affirm, that he knows not of a *single fact in this diocese upon which this charge*, or what is the same, insinuation, *can find any reasonable basis*.

I. What “doctrine has been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of the Church?” I have cast my thoughts back over the last year, and endeavored to recall to mind the objections of any of my clergy or laity to any sermon

preached* in this diocese, by any priest or deacon of the same, and the result of my recollection is: that one has been objected to, as preached against *baptismal regeneration*,—one, against *the true and proper resurrection of the body*, as taught in the Apostle's creed,—one, against *priestly absolution*, and one, in favor of *the Nestorian heresy*. But as the charge in the report of the committee is, doubtless, designed to point in a totally different direction, I must consider my own teaching as alone referred to. For that, I stand ready to answer to the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, as represented by our branch of it. *All* I have taught is now before the public,—*Seven Sermons on the Obedience of Faith, and a Pastoral Letter on the Priestly Office*, exhibiting the whole amount of my teaching during the last year. In regard to the first, there has been no time for the Church to give her verdict; but in respect to the last-named production, I here adduce the judgment of a brother Bishop, than whom a sounder and abler theologian, or a truer son of the Church, cannot be named. In the CHARLESTON GOSPEL MESSENGER, for June last, is the following notice of my *Pastoral Letter on the Priestly Office*:—"Absolution is an outward sign of the blessing of forgiveness; and also a means whereby we receive grace, and a pledge to assure us of grace. And yet it is not a sacrament, as one branch of the Church defines a sacrament, because it was not ordained by Christ Himself! It is an ordinance full of instruction. It manifests the *peculiar* authority of the priesthood,—the valuable trust committed to it,—the comfort which, God hath so ordered it, is to be sought and obtained *generally*, (for we now refer not to exceptions, not to in-

* Some expressions in a little manual at *Valle Crucis* were objected to; but as they were promptly altered by the Bishop, they cannot be considered as embraced in the charge of the Report.

dividual cases, and intend not to deny that the Almighty can dispense with His own regulations) through the intervention of the priesthood. This deep doctrine of Holy Scriptures, taught by the Church, overlooked, if not repudiated, by the sects, is ably vindicated by the Pastoral Letter before us. But not this great truth only ; the title is a complete index to this profound production. The nature of the Christian priesthood,—all about it,—its divine authority,—its momentous functions,—the obligations of the laity in relation to it,—are treated concisely and comprehensively, and in a manner which interests the understanding and the affections. Our extracts will enrich our pages, and sufficiently invite attention to a Pastoral intended, of course, for the Bishop's own diocese, (for he never undertakes to counsel, and direct, and exercise, semi-authority in other dioceses,) but which the members of the Church, American, Anglican, and Scottish, and Indian, &c., cannot read without advantage, although they may not assent to all its details." Page 92. In this day of cowardly shrinking from the Truth, under that "fear of man which bringeth a snare," I thank my brother for so bold and comforting, though too flattering a defence. Particularly, as on this doctrine of *Priestly Absolution*, the great battle of Christ's authority in the Church is to be fought. For, in reference to this, is it to be determined, whether the *sacramental system* of the gospel, or its antagonist, *Lutheranism*, is to prevail with us. This is the doctrine,—the *necessity of Priestly Absolution*, where it may be had, to cancel or remit all sin after baptism, which destroys the life of God in the soul, and separates it from the grace of the covenant,—which, it is said, has called up around your Bishop, so many pale faces, and fainting hearts. But it is the one on which he stands without fear, and will stand, by the help of God, so long as he is allowed to have

part in the apostleship, and struggle on for Christ. Whether the doctrine be according to our Liturgy, let the Church Catholic judge. Indeed, the Church in this diocese has already spoken concerning it.

1. The lamented Bishop Ravenscroft, although, in his teaching, he was compelled to begin somewhat nearer the alphabet of the Faith, has nevertheless given us, in language not easily misunderstood, all the elements of this important truth.

"It appears from Scripture," says the Bishop, using the words of Mr. Law, "that all Sacerdotal power is derived from the Holy Ghost." Then after showing how it is so derived, he concludes: "From this it is manifest that the Priesthood, *is a grace of the Holy Ghost.*" Vol. I. p. 284. Again. "*As my Father sent me, even so send I you. I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me.*" "Hence it is clear," here the Bishop uses his own words: "First, that whatever the authority of Christ, in the Gospel dispensation was, with reference to the Church, of the same extent was that of His Apostles. Secondly, as the Church and ministry, in this dispensation, were intended for perpetuity, therefore this authority must also continue and run parallel with it, through all generations." P. 134. On this ground he says in another place: "The ministry in the Church *is a substitution for THE LORD JESUS CHRIST in person.*" P. 273. Further on, he gives a history of this. "It was to the *eleven* and to them only, that He said, *as my Father sent me even so send I you.* His passion being accomplished, the purchase of redemption completed, and a kingdom conquered from sin and death, then it was, that He conferred on the *eleven* and their successors to the end of the world, authority to plant and govern this Church. *I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me. All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, &c.* It

was when His resurrection had demonstrated His triumph over death and hell, that He transferred His divine commission to His eleven Apostles; that *He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* And it was when His glorious ascension had established His supreme dominion over a redeemed world, that He poured out upon them the Holy Ghost, to qualify them for their work, to certify to the world that they were messengers of heaven, and the depositories of all lawful authority in the kingdom of His dear Son." P. 455. "We consider," he says, the *grace and mercy* of the Gospel as matters of *strict covenant stipulation*, as *bound up with the authority to dispense them*, as *inseparable* from that *authority*, and only by virtue of that *authority*, (with reverence be it spoken,) *pledging* the glorious source of *all mercy and grace* to his creatures." P. 253. "The *grace and mercy* of the Gospel, *bound up with the authority to dispense them*, and *inseparable from that authority*!" What more have I said? What more could I have said, in regard to the necessity of looking to Christ through the priesthood—"the priesthood being *a substitution* for the LORD JESUS CHRIST *in person*"') for the *grace and mercy* of the Gospel—absolution from sin, and strength to resist it? But again—"What is the Gospel but a message of grace to rebels and enemies to Almighty God, offering them pardon and reconciliation on certain prescribed conditions? What is the Church, but the heaven-appointed, visible, and accessible *depository* and *dispenser* of *this grace* through her *commissioned officers*? And what are the officers of the Church called in Scripture? *Ministers, Stewards of Mysteries*, &c. Are not these, then, agents for a specified purpose, and their work an agency? Stand they not in the gap, as it were, between Heaven

and Hell, on this sin-ruined, death-stricken world, sent from God to win souls to CHRIST, and pluck sinners from everlasting burnings?" &c. P. 247. And again, speaking of the ends of the ministry towards the children of God, he says—"The *first* is, the communication of the Gospel to mankind, in order to recover them from the ruin and misery of sin, and from eternal death as its wages. *The second* is, to transact the conditions of this recovery, *receiving the submission of penitent sinners*, and by administering to such the divinely instituted pledges of *pardon*, and *adoption* into the family of God. *The third* is, to *watch over the household of faith*, to provide for their instruction in righteousness, and to *exercise the discipline* of Christ. Who are bound to submit themselves to discipline, where no lawful authority to inflict censure is professed? Above all, who will be found to *regard the discipline of CHRIST*, unless upon the firm persuasion, amounting to fixed faith, that to be justly cut off from the peace and privileges of the visible Church upon earth, is a virtual exclusion of such person from *the Church of the first born, which are written in heaven?* P. 454. Still further. "*He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Here then, my brethren, we have the appointment and purpose of the ministry fully declared to us—and *all depending on this root of unity, the authority of Christ.*" P. 552. A page further on, the Bishop continues—"We can try the spirits whether they are of God by the open and verifiable standard—the descent from those Apostles to whom he committed the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—whom He empowered to bind and loose—whom he empowered to

commit to faithful men, after them, the same precious deposit, even unto the end of the world; and whom He fully authorized for all these glorious and gracious purposes in that *plenary commission*—*As my Father sent me, even so send I you—As my Father appointed unto me a kingdom, so I appoint unto you a kingdom.*” Once more—“Anointed as He was in a peculiar manner, *to preach the Gospel to the poor—to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the LORD*—SO TO HIS MINISTRY IN ALL AGES IS THIS HOLY TRUST COMMITTED. *As my Father sent, &c.; and He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST—whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* SACRED DEPOSIT—AWFUL TRUST—BLESSED PROMISE? *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. Brethren, pray for us.*” P. 625.

“Alas! what blind delusion has seized upon men, that in what concerns their immortal souls, they are carelessly satisfied with a security on which they would not risk their estates, and are *filled with rage*, perhaps, at the friendly hand which would point out their error. But be it so, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, the whole counsel of God must be declared.” P. 555.

Had this noble prelate been making the defence of his most unworthy successor, he could not have spoken more to the purpose than in these extracts—although he speaks incidentally, not having made *priestly absolution* the immediate subject of either of the discourses which have been cited.

Another voice in my diocese, clear and strong, comes to my aid on this important subject. It proceeds from a sermon styled “*Sacradotal Absolution*,”

preached by the Rev. W. A. Curtis, before the North Carolina Convention of 1843, and received with unanimous and urgent importunity on the part of the clergy for its publication. I regret that my limits will not allow me to give it entire. May I not hope, however, that at least my brethren of the clergy will once more have recourse to its sound and godly, and much needed instructions. The text is John xx. 23. "*Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*" I can adduce only the concluding point. "The *judicial absolution of the minister*, or the power of executing Church discipline, must, also, seriously affect his subject in his relation to, and favor with God. For as union with Christ is ordinarily effected through means instituted in the Church, and as without union with Him none can hope for salvation, they who are excluded for their offences from a participation in those mystical pledges of the divine life, are severed from the body of Christ, and cut off from those channels of quickening grace, through which salvation is ordinarily conveyed to mankind. And as God has constituted His ministry through the agents or instruments of this mystical union by the Church, He will certainly ratify and confirm their just judgment upon those who are admitted or excluded. If they who are in the pale of the kingdom are in a state of salvation, and they who are out of it are in a state of condemnation, the action of those who have power to open and shut its doors, cannot be looked upon as of no effect in their final destiny, or their present spiritual relation and condition."

Is not, let me ask the candid, earnest Christian, (the Christian who is more anxious to follow the *truth* and save his soul, than to sustain a *party*,) is not the principle here so clearly, and, if there be any certainty in God's word, truly stated, as applicable to the absolution of those, who, by the *grievousness* of

their *secret* sins, cut *themselves* off from *communion with Christ*, as it is to the absolution of such as, by their open and discovered offences, have been cut off by Christ's representative? The severance of the bond of union with Christ is as real in the one case as in the other, "Whoso *abideth in Him sinneth not*." "If we say we *have fellowship with Him*, and walk in darkness we lie, and do not the truth." And the Church says, if we come to the Holy Communion with grievous sin upon us, we "*only increase our condemnation*." He therefore who is under the power of such sin, however *secret*, is as effectually barred from all communion with Christ, as he whose sin, by having been found out, is visited upon his head in visible exclusion from the grace of the covenant.* The case of the latter is only more fearful in its placing the offender in a more hopeless state, under a sentence which makes it more difficult for him to return—under an authoritative curse. Upon true repentance, however, in either case, union with Christ may be restored. But can it in either be restored without priestly intervention and absolution? Surely not, if, as the sermon states, and states scripturally, *God has constituted His ministry the agents or instruments of this mystical union*.

2. But it is said—the Church, in the Exhortation to the Holy Communion, supposes that the grievous sinner may safely come upon *mere repentance*. "*Repent ye of your sins, or else come not, &c.*" The error here lies, I think, in understanding "repentance" in a restricted, popular sense; and not in the sense of

* That the primitive Church regarded certain sins, as of *themselves* excommunicating the sinner, is not doubtful. "A person," says Mr. Blackmore, in his *Antiquities*, "was legally convicted in *three* ways: 1. By his own confession. 2. By the evidence of unexceptionable witnesses. 3. By such notoriety of the fact as made a man liable to excommunication *ipso facto*, without any further process, there being *no need of a formal sentence*, for they stood excommunicated *ipso facto*"—Vol. i. p. 307.

the Church. "Now in a penitent's or convert's duty," says Hooker, "there are included, *first*, the aversion of the will from sin; *secondly*, the submission of ourselves to God, by supplication and prayer; *thirdly*, the purpose of a new life, testified with present works of amendment: which *three things* do very well seem to be comprised in one definition, by them which handle repentance, as a virtue that hateth, bewaileth, and sheweth a purpose to amend sin. We offend God in thought, word, and deed. To the *first* of which three, they make *Contrition*, to the second *Confession*, and to the last our works of *Satisfaction*, answerable.

3. "*Contrition* doth not here import those sudden pangs and convulsions of the mind which cause sometimes the most forsaken of God to retract their own doings; it is no natural passion or anguish, which riseth in us against our wills, but a deliberate aversion of the will of man from sin; which being always accompanied with grief, and grief oftentimes partly with tears, partly with other external signs, it hath been thought, that in these things contrition doth chiefly consist." "Forasmuch as we cannot hate sin in ourselves without heaviness and grief, that there should be in us a thing of such hateful quality, the will averted from sin must needs make the affection suitable; yea, great reason why it should so do; for sith the will by conceiving sin hath deprived the *soul of life*; and of life there is no recovery without repentance—the death of sin; repentance not able to kill sin but by withdrawing the will from it; the will impossible to be withdrawn, unless it concur with a contrary affection to that which accompanied it before in evil: is it not clear, that as an inordinate delight did first begin sin, so repentance must begin with a just sorrow, a sorrow of heart, and such a sorrow *as rendeth the heart*, neither a feigned nor a slight sorrow; not feigned, lest it increase sin; nor slight, lest

the pleasures of sin overmatch it." "Of the *first* among these duties, *contrition*,—let this suffice."

4. "Although the *virtue* of repentance,* do require that her other two parts, *confession and satisfaction*, should here follow, yet seeing they belong as well to the discipline as to the virtue of repentance, and only differ for that in the one they are *performed to man*, in the other to God alone; I had rather distinguish in joint handling, than handle them apart."

Hooker proceeds to give his judgment "on the *discipline of repentance* as instituted by CHRIST, practised by the *Fathers*, converted by the schoolmen into a Sacrament; and of *confession*; that which belongeth to the *virtue of repentance*, that which was used among the Jews, that which the Papacy imagineth a Sacrament, and that which ancient discipline practiced." I shall here give only that which has respect to the point in hand,—to the discipline of repentance, embracing confession and satisfaction, as instituted by Christ and received and practiced by the "One Catholic and Apostolic Church," to the judgment of which we are bound by our principles implicitly to defer.

"Our Lord and Saviour," says Hooker,—"in the 16th of St. Matthew's Gospel, giveth His Apostles regiment in general over God's Church. For they that have the keys of the kingdom of heaven are thereby signified to be stewards of the house of God, under whom they *guide, command, judge and correct* His family. The *souls of men are God's treasure*, committed to the trust and fidelity of such as must render a strict account for the *very least which is under their custody*. God hath not invested them with the power to make a revenue thereof, but to use it for the good of them whom Jesus Christ hath most dearly bought.

* The author had in the previous section distinguished repentance into these two parts, the *virtue* and the *discipline* of repentance.

“And because their office herein consisteth of sundry functions, some belonging to doctrine, some to discipline, *all contained in the name of the keys*; they have for matters of discipline, as well litigious as criminal, their courts and consistories erected by the heavenly *authority of His most sacred voice* who hath said, *Die Ecclesiæ, Tell the Church*: against rebellious and contumacious persons which refuse to obey their sentence, armed they are with power to eject such out of the Church, to deprive them of the honours, rights, and privileges of Christian men, to make them as heathen and publicans, with whom society was hateful.

“Furthermore, *lest their acts should be slenderly accounted of, or had in contempt*, whether they admit to the fellowship of saints or seclude from it, whether they bind offenders or set them at liberty, whether *they remit or retain sins*, whatsoever is done by way of orderly and lawful proceeding, the LORD HIMSELF hath promised to ratify. This is that grand, original warrant, by force whereof the guides and prelates in God’s Church, *first His Apostles, and afterwards others following them successively*, did both use and uphold that discipline, the *end whereof* is to *heal men’s consciences, to cure their sins, to reclaim offenders from iniquity, and to make them by repentance just.*”

“Neither hath it of ancient time for any other respect been accustomed to bind by ecclesiastical censures, to retain so bound till tokens of manifest repentance appeared, and upon apparent repentance to release, saving only because this was received as *a most expedient method for the cure of sin.*

“The course of discipline in former ages reformed open transgressors by putting them to offices of open penitence: especially *confession*, whereby they declared their own crimes, in the hearing of the whole Church, and were not from the time of their first

convention capable of the holy mysteries of Christ, till they had solemnly discharged this duty.

5. "Offenders in *secret, knowing themselves altogether unworthy to be admitted to the Lord's table, as the others which were withheld*, being also persuaded, if the *Church did direct* them in their offices of penitency, and assist them with public prayer, they should more *easily obtain that they sought*, than by trusting *wholly to their own endeavors*; finally, having no impediment to stay them from it but bashfulness, which countervailed not the former inducements, and besides, was greatly eased by the *good construction which the charity of those times gave to such actions*, wherein men's piety and voluntary care to be reconciled to God, did purchase them much more love, than their faults (the testimonies of common frailty) were able to procure disgrace; they made it not nice to use some *one of the ministers of God*, by whom the rest might take notice of their faults, prescribe them convenient remedies, and in the end, after public confession, all join in prayer unto God for them.

"The first beginning of this custom had the more followers, by means of that special favor which always was, with GOOD CONSIDERATION, *showed towards voluntary penitents* above the rest. But as professors of Christian belief grew more in number, so they waxed worse, when kings and princes had submitted their dominions unto the sceptre of Jesus Christ, by means whereof persecution ceasing, the Church immediately became subject to those evils, which peace and security bring forth; there was not now that love which before kept all things in tune, but everywhere schisms, discords, dissensions amongst men, conventicles of heretics, bent more vehemently against the sounder and better sort than very infidels and heathens themselves; faults not corrected in charity, but noted with delight, and

kept for malice to use when deadliest opportunities should be offered. Whereupon, forasmuch as public confessions became dangerous and prejudicial to the safety of well-minded men, and in divers respects advantageous to the enemies of God's Church, it seemed first unto some, and afterwards generally, requisite, that *voluntary penitents* should surcease from open confession. Instead whereof, when once *private and secret confession* had taken place with the Latins, it continued as a *profitable ordinance* till the Lateran Council," A. D. 1215. Vol. ii. pp. 244-247.

7. Hooker, after arguing that the Romish Church departed from the primitive Church in erecting *auricular confession* into a *sacrament*, and making it necessary unto all men to eternal salvation, proceeds:—"Were the Fathers then, without use of *private confession* as long as public was in use? *I affirm no such thing.* The first and ancientest that mentioneth this confession is Origen,* by whom it may seem that

* Wheatley on the Common Prayer, set forth by the House of Bishops, has the following on the *rubric*, in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. "The sick person is to be further **MOVED** to make *special confession of his sins*, if he feel his conscience troubled with any matters; i. e. I suppose, if he has committed any sin for which the censures of the Church ought to be inflicted; (better as put by Bishop Sparrow—"It would be considered whether every *deadly sin*, be not a weighty matter;") or else he is perplexed concerning the nature or some nice circumstances of his crime. It was upon the former of these cases, that private confession seems at first to have been appointed; for, in the early ages of the Church, when the public humiliation of scandalous offenders was observed to be attended with some great advantages, many persons of zeal would not only rank themselves in the class of public penitents for sins done in *secret*, but would even solemnly confess before the congregation the particular crime, for which they desired to *make satisfaction*, by submitting to penance. Now, though it was fit that what had been openly committed in the face of the world, should be openly retracted, that so the scandal might be removed; yet, it might often happen, that in the case of *secret* sins, it would be better that the particulars should be kept concealed. For this reason a *penitentiary* or *confessor* was *early* appointed in every diocese, to whom persons in doubt should resort, and consult with him, what, on the one hand, might be fit for publication, and what, on the other, would better be kept se-

men, being loth to present rashly themselves and their faults unto the view of the whole Church, thought it best, first to unfold their minds to some special man of the clergy, which might either help them himself, or refer them to a higher court, if need were. 'Be, therefore, circumspect,' saith Origen, 'in making choice of the party to whom thou meanest to confess thy sin; know thy physician before thou use him; if he find thy malady such as needeth to be made public, that others may be the better by it, and thyself sooner helpt, his counsel must be obeyed and followed.'

"That which moveth sinners," continues Hooker, "thus voluntarily to detect themselves, both in *private* and public, was fear to receive with other christian men the mysteries of heavenly grace, till God's *appointed stewards and ministers* did *judge them* worthy. It is in this respect, that St. Ambrose findeth fault with certain men which sought imposition of penance, and were not willing to wait their time, but would presently be admitted communicants. 'Such people,' saith he, 'do seek by so rash and preposterous desires, rather to bring the priest into bonds than to loose themselves.' In this respect it is,

cret. So that, though public penance was still generally assigned for grievous offences that were privately committed; yet the persons that confessed did not always make a public declaration of the fact for which they appeared in the rank of penitents. This is the best conjecture we are able to make concerning the rise of the penitentiary's office; though we have some footsteps of *private und secret confessions before we read of any stated confessor*. For Origen, who lived *at the beginning of the third century*, speaks of *private confessions* as the *received usage of his time*, and only advises the choice of a person that was fit to be trusted. And St. Cyprian, that lived much about the same time, commends the zeal of those who laid open *even their thoughts and intentions* of offering sacrifices to idols (though they had not yet proceeded to the fact,) with grief and sincerity, before the priest. And much the same advice is given by others, who mention private confession as a general and well known practice, and only caution the penitents to choose such persons to consult with, as will be careful and tender of their reputation and safety."—P. 427.

that St. Augustine hath likewise said, 'when the wound of sin is so wide, and the disease so far gone, that the medicinable body and blood of our Lord may not be touched, men are, by the bishop's authority, to sequester themselves from the altar, till such times as they have repented, and be after reconciled by the same authority.'"

"Furthermore," says Hooker, "because the knowledge how to handle our own sores is no common and vulgar art, but *we either carry towards ourselves, for the most part, an oversoft and gentle hand, fearful of touching too near the quick, or else endeavoring not to be partial, we fall into timorous scrupulosities*, and sometimes into those extreme discomforts of mind, from which we do hardly ever lift up our heads again; men thought it the safest way to disclose their *secret* faults, and to crave imposition of penance *from them whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in his Church to be spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls*, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto newness of life, but also *in the private particular cure of diseased minds*.

"However the Novatianists presume to plead against the Church, saith Salvianus, that every man ought to be his own penitentiary, and that it is a part of our duty to exercise, but not of the Church's, authority to impose or prescribe repentance;" "*the truth is otherwise*," saith Hooker; "the best and strongest of us may need, in such cases, direction.* What doth the Church, in giving penance, but show the remedies which sin requireth? or what do we, in receiving the same, but fulfil her precepts? What else but sue unto God with tears and fasts, that his merciful ears may be opened? St. Augustine's ex-

* Here Hooker would perhaps remind us of the fact, presented in his memoirs, that he not only acted as a confessor himself, but constantly resorted to one for spiritual directions.

hortation is directly to the same purpose : ‘ Let every man while he hath time, judge himself, and change his life of his own accord, and when this is resolved upon, let him, from *the disposers of the Holy Sacraments*, learn in what manner he is *to pacify God’s displeasure.*”

Having given another reason why men of the Primitive Church were forward and willing, upon their knees, to confess whatever they had committed against God, he concludes with a passage from Gregory of Nyssa—“ Make the priest as a father, partaker of thy affliction and grief. Be bold to impart unto him the things that *are most secret* ; he will have care both of thy safety and of thy credit.” Vol. ii. pp. 259—261.

Let such persons as deny that private voluntary confession and penitence were general in the primitive Church, note the following passage, in which Hooker settles this question. “ As for notorious, wicked persons, whose crimes were known, to convert, judge, or punish them, was the office of the *Ecclesiastical Consistory* ; *Penitentiaries* had their institution to *another end*. Now, unless we imagine that the *ancient time* knew no other repentance than *public*, or that they had little occasion to speak of any other repentance, or else in speaking thereof, they used some other name, and not the name of repentance, whereby to express private penitency ; how standeth it with reason, that wheresoever they write of penitents, it should be thought they meant only public penitents ? *The truth is*, they handled all *three kinds*, but *private voluntary much oftener*, as being of *far more general use* ; whereas public was but incident *unto few*, and not oftener than *once* incident unto any. Howbeit, because they do not distinguish one kind of penitency from another by difference of *names*, our safest way for construction is, to follow circumstance of *matter*, which in this narration will not yield itself applicable

only unto public penance, do *what they can* who thus expound it.

“They boldly and confidently affirm, that no man being compellable to confess publicly any sin before Novatian’s time, the end of instituting penitentiaries afterwards in the Church was, that by them men might be constrained to public confession. Is there any record in the world which doth testify this to be true? There is that testifieth to the plain contrary. For Sozomen, declaring purposely the cause of their institution, saith—‘That whereas men openly craving pardon at God’s hands, (for public confession, the last act of penitency, was always made in the form of a contrite prayer unto God,) it could not be avoided that they must withal confess what their offences were; this, in the opinion of their prelates, seemed from the first beginning (as we may probably think) to be somewhat burdensome’; “not burdensome, I think,” says Hooker, “to notorious offenders; for what more just than in such sort to discipline *them*? but burdensome, that men whose crimes were unknown, should blaze their own faults, as it were on a stage, acquainting all the people with whatsoever they had done amiss. And therefore, to remedy this inconvenience, they laid the charge *upon one only Priest*, chosen out of such as were of best conversation, a *silent and discreet* man, to whom, they which had offended, might resort and *lay open their lives*. He, according to the quality of every one’s transgressions, appointed what they should do or suffer, and left them to execute it upon themselves. Can we wish a more direct and evident testimony, that the office here spoken of was to save voluntary penitents from the burden of public confession, and not to constrain notorious offenders thereunto?” p. 268, &c.

This is sufficient to show that Hooker not only admitted, but defended the practice of voluntary private confession, in the purest and most catholic days of the primitive Church.

7. "The Church of England," says Wheatly, on Common Prayer, p. 428, "at the Reformation, in the particular now before us, freed it from all the encroachments with which the Church of Rome had embarrassed it, and reduced confession to its primitive plan. She neither calls it a sacrament, nor requires it to be used as *universally* necessary; but *because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience*; she therefore advises, *that if there be any who is not able to quiet his own conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel, he should come to his own, or some other discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding all scruples and doubtfulness*. Here we see there is nothing arbitrarily prescribed, but every one is left to his own discretion. All that was absolutely enjoined, was only a mutual forbearance and peace, for the security of which, a clause was added in the First Book of King Edward, *requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession, not to be offended with them that do use to their further satisfying, the auricular and secret confession to a priest*. Nor those, also, who think needful and convenient, for the quietness of their own conscience, particularly to open their sins to the priest, to be offended with them that are satisfied with their humble confessions to God, and the general confession to the Church. But in all things to follow and keep the rule of charity; and every man to be satisfied with his own conscience, not judging other mens' minds or consciences; whereas he hath no warrant of God's word to the same. What could have been added more judiciously than this to temper, on the one hand, the rigors of those who were too apt, at that time, to insist upon confession as

absolutely necessary to salvation ; and to prevent, on the other hand, a *carelessness* in those who, being *prejudiced against the abuse,* were apt, indiscriminately, to reject the thing*, as at no time *needful* or useful to a penitent ! So that we may still, I presume, wish VERY CONSISTENTLY *with the determination of our Church*, that our people would apply themselves, oftener than they do, to the spiritual physicians, even in time of their health : SINCE IT IS MUCH TO BE FEARED THAT THEY ARE WOUNDED OFTENER THAN THEY COMPLAIN, AND YET THROUGH AVERSION TO DISCLOSING THEIR SORE, SUFFER IT TO GANGRENE, FOR WANT OF THEIR HELP WHO SHOULD WORK THE CURE.

“ But present ease is not the only benefit the penitent may expect from the confessor’s aid ; he will be better assisted in the regulation of his life ; and when his last conflict shall make its approach, the holy man being no stranger to the state of his soul, will be better prepared to guide and conduct it through all difficulties that may oppose. Though our Church leaves it, in a manner, to any one’s discretion, in the time of health, whether they will be satisfied with a general confession to God and the Church ; yet when they are sick, she thinks it proper that they be *MOVED to make a special confession of their sins to the priest, if they feel their consciences troubled with any weighty matter*. For how will he be able to satisfy their doubts, *if he be not let into the particulars of their case?*† Or with what assurance can he absolve them, or admit them to the peace

* “ How far,” says Wheatly, “ this (auricular confession) came afterwards to be abused, is too well known to need any proof: *but no argument sure can be drawn, that because a practice has been abused, it should therefore cease to be used*. The abuses of it should be *reformed*, but not *the practice of it discontinued*.” P. 428 on B. C. P.

† How can the priest do this—solve their doubts—any more effectually, without knowing “ *the particulars of their case,*” when they are in health, than when they are sick ?

and communion of the Church, before he is apprised how far they have deserved its censure and bonds? If, therefore, they are desirous of the following consolations," (their *absolution*) "which the Church hath provided for their quiet and ease, it is fit they should first declare and make known what burden it is, from which they want to be freed." P. 430.

Thus far have I exhibited from Hooker and Wheatly what, after careful examination, seemed to me to be the true history of auricular or private confession, as held and practiced by the primitive Church, and as held and *intended* to be practiced by our own. But as I have considered confession thus far as inseparable from absolution, I shall defer any further remarks on the former till I return to the latter, which I propose to do, after citing something more from Hooker on the third part of repentance, viz., *satisfaction*.

8. "There resteth now only *satisfaction* to be considered, a point which the Fathers do often touch. And it is happy for the Church of God, that we have the writings of the Fathers to show what their meaning was. The name of Satisfaction, as the ancient Fathers meant it, containeth whatever a penitent should do, in the humbling himself unto God, and testifying by deeds of contrition the same which confession in words pretendeth." He proceeds to illustrate this view by citations from the Fathers. The following he adduces from St. Cyprian: "We feel," says that Father, "the bitter smart of his rod and scourge, because there is in us neither care to please Him with our good deeds, nor to satisfy Him for our evil." Again, "let the eyes which have looked on idols sponge out their unlawful acts with those sorrowful tears, *which have power to satisfy God.*" He gives the following from St. Augustine: "*Three things* there are in perfect penitency, *compunction, confession, and satisfaction*; that as we

three ways offend God, viz., in *heart, word and deed*, so by *three duties* we may *satisfy* God."

"Satisfaction as a part," continues Hooker, "comprehendeth only that which the Baptist meant by *works worthy of repentance*; and if we speak of the whole work of repentance itself, we may, in the phrase of antiquity, term it very well *satisfaction*."

"*Satisfaction* is a work which *justice requireth* to be done for contentment of persons injured; neither is it a sufficient satisfaction unless it fully equal the injury for which we satisfy. Seeing then that sin against God, eternal and infinite, must needs be an infinite wrong; justice in regard thereof doth necessarily exact an infinite recompense, or else inflict upon the offender infinite punishment. Now, because God was thus to be satisfied, and man not able to make satisfaction in such sort, His unspeakable love and inclination to save mankind, ordained in our behalf a Mediator, to do that which had been to any other impossible. Wherefore, all sin is remitted in *the only faith of CHRIST's passion*, and *no man without belief thereof justified*. For inasmuch as God will have the benefit of Christ's satisfaction both thankfully acknowledged and duly esteemed of all such as enjoy the same, He therefore imparteth so high a treasure to no man whose faith hath not made him willing by repentance to do even that, which of itself, how unavailable soever, yet being required and accepted with God, we are in Christ made thereby capable and fit vessels to receive the fruit of His satisfaction: yea, we so far please and content God, that because when we have offended He looketh but for repentance at our hands, our repentance and the works thereof are therefore termed *satisfactory*." P. 281.

"Repentance is a name which noteth the habit and operation of a certain grace or virtue in us; *satisfaction the effect which it hath either with God or man*.

And it is not in this respect said amiss, that satisfaction importeth *acceptation, reconciliation, and amity*, because that, though satisfaction on the one part made, and allowed on the other, they which before did reject are now content to receive, they to be born again which were lost, and they to love unto whom just cause of hatred was given. It is therefore true, that our Lord Jesus Christ, by one most precious and propitiatory sacrifice, which was His body, a gift of infinite worth, offered for the sins of the whole world, hath thereby once reconciled us to God, purchased his general free pardon, and turned away divine indignation from mankind. But we are not for that cause to think any office of penitence either needless or fruitless on our own behalf; for then would not God have required any such duties at our hands. CHRIST doth remain everlastingly a gracious intercessor, even for every particular penitent. Let this assure us, that God, how highly soever displeased and incensed with our sins, is, notwithstanding, for His sake, by our tears pacified, taking that for satisfaction which is done by us, because Christ hath, by His satisfaction, made it acceptable. For, as He is the High Priest of our Salvation, so He hath made us priests likewise under Him, to the end we might offer unto God praise and thankfulness while we continue in the way of life, and when we sin, the satisfaction and propitiatory sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart." P. 282.

"Amongst the *works of satisfaction*, the most respected have been always these *three: Prayers, Fasts, and Alms-deeds*. By *prayer* we lift up our souls to Him from whom sin and iniquity hath withdrawn them; by fasting we reduce the body from thralldom under vain delights, and make it serviceable for parts of virtuous conversation; by alms we dedicate to charity those worldly goods and possessions which unrighteousness doth neither get nor bestow well. The

first a token of piety intended towards God ; the second a pledge of moderation and sobriety in the carriage of our own persons ; the last a testimony of our meaning to do good unto all men. In which three, the apostle, by way of abridgment, comprehendeth whatever may appertain to sanctimony, holiness, and good life : as contrariwise the very mass of general corruption throughout the world, what is it but only *forgetfulness* of God, *carnal pleasure*, and immoderate desire after worldly things ; *profaneness*, *licentiousness*, *covetousness*.

“ All offices of repentance have these two properties : there is in performance of them *painfulness*, and in their nature a *contrariety to sin*. The one consideration causeth them, both in Holy Scripture and elsewhere, to be termed judgments, or *revenges taken voluntarily upon ourselves*, and to be furthermore preservatives from future evils ; inasmuch as we commonly use to keep with the greater care that which with pain we have recovered. And they are in the other respect contrary to sin committed ; *contrition* contrary to the pleasure ; *confession* to the error, which is a mother of sin ; and to the deeds of sin, the works of *satisfaction* contrary ; therefore they all are the more effectual to cure the evil habit thereof. Hereunto it was that St. Cyprian referred his earnest and vehement exhortations, ‘ That they which had fallen should be instant in prayer, reject *bodily ornaments* when once they had stripped themselves of Christ’s attire ; abhor all food after Satan’s morsels tasted ; follow works of righteousness which work away sin ; and be plentiful in almsdeeds, wherewith souls are delivered from death.’ Not, as if God did, according to corrupt judges, take so much money to abate so much in the punishment of malefactors. ‘ These duties,’ saith Salvianus, ‘ must be offered not in confidence to redeem or buy out sin, but as tokens of meek submission ; neither are they

with God accepted, because of their value, but for the affection's sake, which doth thereby show itself." P. 287.

Hooker proceeds to show that *satisfaction* demands, when sins have been forgiven against men, full restitution, to the extent of our power; and that it furthermore demands, when the Church, in the exercise of her lawful authority, imposes upon grievous sinners any penance, a strict compliance with it, in order to be restored to God's favor. As upon these points, however, I have no need to enlarge, I will conclude this discussion of repentance in its three parts:—*contrition*, *confession*, and *satisfaction*, with the remark, that when the Church in her Exhortation, calls upon men to "*repent* or not come to the Holy Communion," she means *repentance* to be understood in this extended sense: confession being considered either as made publicly in the Church, or as made privately to God through the priesthood. Hence, I infer, that she did not intend in this Exhortation, to encourage the idea, that the sinner who, by the grievousness of his sin, had separated himself from communion with Christ, might, nevertheless, by the mere "virtue of repentance," without *priestly absolution*, be restored to his fellowship. In this inference, too, I shall be strengthened by the consideration, that the Church admits no one to the blessed sacrament without confession and absolution.

9. Now, the *forms* of absolution in the Church from the beginning have been various, but her intention has been one, viz.: to convey pardon from God through the *Priest*, to the truly penitent. In regard to our own form in the daily service, the following is pertinent and sound:—"That form of absolution," says Mr. Curtis, "is entitled a Declaration of Absolution; and from hence, some have inferred that the absolution was not actual. But the term declaration has reference merely to the *formal act*, and

by no means excludes its effect. The authoritative publication of pardon from a sovereign is *formally* a declarative act, and as such may be called a declaration of pardon; but the terms of the instrument, and the authority to promulgate, render it effectual to all the purposes therein specified. When it is said, "Almighty God hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins," we can hardly suppose that such language is used to usher in an act *merely* formal, *inefficient* and *powerless*. Where an authorized agent is commissioned to declare and pronounce anything, it would be a solemn farce if all the effects enunciated did not actually follow. The effect, may, indeed, be limited by the presence of conditions, but this does not detract from an authoritative assurance and actual collation of benefits to all who have complied with them. The meaning which some would derive from our form is the same as if it read—a declaration of the *terms* of absolution. But, if the title actually read thus, it would not be a true enunciation of the act, for the form evidently contains more than that. The terms (repentance) are, indeed, enunciated; but only as the condition upon which an actual absolution may be pronounced. What is that *power* which is said to be given by Almighty God to His ministers? Is it a power merely to *say*, that God pardons the sins of the penitent? This is a natural power possessed by all who have the faculty of speech and know the revelations of the Gospel, (certainly by *deacons* who are authorized to *preach*, but forbidden to pronounce this absolution,) and would hardly demand the solemn enunciation contained in the form of absolution. So far from this being its import, it is expressly stated, that the minister does by divine authority, both declare *and pronounce absolution and remission, &c.*,

declares and pronounces the sins of the penitent actually absolved and remitted. Finally, in the English Liturgy, it is not entitled ‘a Declaration of Absolution;’ but ‘The Absolution, or Remission of sins;’ which fully shows the meaning intended by the form.” P. 29.

Besides, the form in the English book, in “*the Order for the Visitation of the Sick*,” shows, conclusively, what the mind of our branch of the Church is on the effect of priestly absolution. The form is as follows:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners, who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by *his* authority *committed to me*, I ABSOLVE thee from *all thy* sins, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.”

Now what can show more strongly than this, that the Church believes, and hence that we as her faithful children believe, that the priests, when they pronounce these words over the truly penitent, do convey really and directly God’s pardon to their consciences, for all their sins and offences committed against him? I know an attempt has been made by some, and among them, no less a ritualist than Dr. Wheatly, to limit this absolution to Church censures. But surely nothing short of the most inveterate and blinding attachment to theory could have led to such an interpretation. For when we examine the rubrics, and observe that all sick persons visited are to be MOVED to “*a special confession of their sins*,” and hence *all*, “*if they heartily desire it*,” must be absolved by the priest in this form; and when we consider too, that this is the form prescribed in the Book of Edward VI, to be used for *all penitents*, (well or sick,) privately confessing their sins unto the priest; we cannot doubt, that in the mind of the reformed Church in England the priest, in pronouncing abso-

lution to "all those who with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto God," does, as Christ's representative or instrument, (acting by His power and authority,) actually convey His pardon to their souls. This then being the Church's mind, it matters little whether her "ministers are to be understood as praying or preaching, judging or declaring"—seeing their instrumentality is employed by the Most High in bestowing on penitent believers the gift of pardon.

Although I have chosen to rely, mainly, in establishing this point, upon the Church herself, to call her up to testify to her own gifts; yet it is right to summon her faithful sons, "who have finished their course in faith," to add their witness; but I have space only for a mere allusion, and I will make it in the language of the ablest Church periodical of our day. "Cosin, Sparrow, Overal, Comber, and all our great canonists, have ever declared with one voice, that in her absolutions the Church acts with a real power, truly dispensing to the faithful and penitent that gift of pardon, of which it has pleased her Father above to appoint her to be the channel. And this," continues the same writer, "becomes still more clear, if from the consideration of individual expressions, we mount to the general principles of her office towards men. For the Church is the revealed line of God's action on that work of re-creation in which it has pleased him to labor. She is the appointed channel, the living law, through which the Mediator, who was once visible among men, is spiritually present. Her ordinances, therefore, are all replete with life; her voice is the utterance of God's oracles, and her children are bound by true reason to the Most High. When he took our nature in the Virgin's womb, there commenced that mysterious work, of which every sacrament, and every declaration of God's forgiveness, is a consequence. In this work he is the sole original agent. He delegates to no man an indepen-

dent authority. He himself cleanses, feeds, forgives, accepts the sinner. His ministers cannot exclude their chief, or occupy any separate position." When they *absolve*, they act in his place, pronounce by his authority, and impart his grace.*

10. While, therefore, *private confession* is not regarded by our branch of the One Catholic Church, "as generally necessary to salvation," and hence, as in the primitive Church, is left to the *voluntary* action of individuals under *contrition*, moving them thereto; yet as priestly *absolution* from all deadly sin, after baptism, is regarded necessary, it becomes a question for each one to determine, how far the effects of such absolution may or may not depend upon this kind of confession. What the Church has not enjoined as necessary, may become so, however, by the moral state of individuals. What is not imposed as a condition, may be, in certain cases, required as a means. Confirmation is not imposed as a necessary condition of salvation; and yet sinful men may be in a state, requiring the grace of confirmation to ensure their perseverance in the life of faith. *Absolution* not only confers grace, but exacts *conditions*, and implies, more or less, *priestly judgment*. The conditions are comprised in the single term, repentance; one part of which, however, as we have seen, is *confession*. To ensure the effect of *absolution*, this confession (1) must embrace sin that separates the soul from communion with Christ. St. Chrysostom, as quoted with approbation by Hooker, says, "*To call ourselves sinners availeth nothing, except as we lay our faults in the balance and take the weight of them ONE BY ONE.*" (2.) Again, our confession must have in it both the number and right conception of sins, in order to bring the soul into a state of remission. "A general persuasion," continues Chrysostom in the

* See note at the end of this Letter.

same place, "that thou art a sinner, will neither so humble nor bridle thy soul, as if *the catalogue of thy sins examined severally* be continually kept in mind. This shall make thee lowly in thine own eyes. This shall preserve thy feet from falling, and sharpen thy desire towards all good things. *The mind*, I know, *doth hardly admit such unpleasant remembrances*, but *we must force it* thereunto. It is safer now to be bitten with the *memory*, than hereafter with the *torment* of sin."

Now take the great body of those baptized in infancy, who have grown up unmindful of their vows and in a state of rebellion against God and His grace; will they be likely, in any general confession, to humble themselves to an admission even of the real heinousness of their guilt? And, if they are sufficiently humbled to do it, have long habits of deadly sin brought no blindness upon their hearts—no insensibility into their consciences, which must incapacitate them to judge of the nature, and hence of the number of their sins? Would they be able, under such circumstances, to "*take their weight*, ONE BY ONE—examine the *catalogue* of their sins *severally*?" But this must be done. Tertullian affirms, that "confession doth as much abate the weight of men's offences as concealment doth *make them heavier*." This concealment may arise from both the depravity and blindness of our minds, which we cannot well manage ourselves. There is another class of persons, who are in great danger from a morbid state of mind, of over estimating their offences, and missing their true character. How are such persons to be aided by a general confession merely?

Further, *absolution* looks to the *cure of sin*, as well as its remission. Hooker remarks, in a passage already cited, (3.) "The power to remit and retain sins" was given to the "guides and prelates of God's Church," to uphold that discipline, "the

end whereof is to *heal mens' consciences*, to CURE THEIR SINS, to reclaim offenders; and to make them by *repentance* JUST." Again, he says, "The knowledge how to handle our sores is *no vulgar and common act*," and the reason he gives is, that we are prone to be *partial* and *over tender with ourselves*, and besides, that we often fall into 'timorous scrupulosities,' and so into extreme discomforts of mind;" hence that earnest men in the primitive Church thought it "the safest way to *disclose their secret faults*, and crave imposition of *penance* from them whom our *Lord Jesus Christ* hath left in His Church to be *spiritual and ghostly physicians*, the *guides* and *pastors of redeemed souls*, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in the *private, particular cure of diseased souls*." But how can this benefit be secured in the present state of confession? How can the physician prescribe in wisdom and *honesty*, without knowing the disease? Bishop Ravenscroft, in discussing the relative duties of pastor and people, enjoins upon the latter, "*that they make their pastor*," I use his words, "*acquainted with their spiritual condition*," and bitterly laments that in our system, there is such a want of inclination and opportunity for this.

(4.) One more thing connects itself with *absolution*, which seems to require that *confession* be something more than what it is at present with us. It is that in *absolution* alone, we can be restored to that communion with Christ in His Church, from which our grievous sins had separated us. "With us," says Hooker, "the ministers of God's most holy word and sacraments all are put in trust with the *custody* and *dispensation* of those mysteries, (the body and blood of Christ,) wherein our communion is and hath been ever accounted the highest grace that men on earth are admitted into." But how, I would

ask, according to our present practice, with our discipline lost, our confession only *general*—"the carelessness of which," says Hooker, "doth commonly *extinguish* all remorse of mens' *particular*, enormous crimes"—how, I ask, under such discouragements, are we to keep grievous sinners among our people, from gathering a false peace from our public *absolution*, and going thence to the holy altar, *to eat and drink damnation to themselves?*" Suppose, as Hooker advises, we give them "very fearful admonition, *what woes are perpendicularly hanging over the heads of such as dare adventure to put forth their unworthy hands* to those admirable *mysteries of life*, which have been by *rare examples* proved *conduits of irremediable death to impenitent receivers;*" will this prevent "the *carelessness of general confession* from *extinguishing, as it commonly doth, mens' remorse for their particular*" sins; and enable us to give a good "account of their souls" in the day of judgment?

Here are my reasons, dear brethren, for what I have said and written on the subject of *confession* and *absolution*. Less I could not have said and been faithful to you; less, and saved my own soul. When you can succeed in making me careless for your salvation, or in taking away my responsibility as your chief shepherd, or in reducing me to that common snare and slavery, "the fear of man," or in inspiring me with that recklessness of divine truth and eternal safety, which moves so many to barter *heaven* for *earth*, then, and not till then, may you expect my silence and my inaction on these momentous subjects! But as a diocese you do not desire this! As a diocese, you wish to deprive no one of *the liberty* with which Christ and the Church hath *made us free!* As a diocese, you wish to know the truth, and save your souls!

II. But, it is said, or *insinuated*, we care not which, "ceremonies and practices have been introduced,

either unauthorized by the customs of this Church, or in plain violation of its rubrics." "*Unauthorized* by the custom of *this* Church!" Of *what* Church, I would ask? Of the Church in North Carolina? Which of the congregations shall we take as a *standard*? Of which Church in the United States? To which of the dioceses shall we look for guidance? Or of the mother country? Upon what period of her history may we fix, as exhibiting the settled and *authoritative* customs of our branch of the *One Catholic Church*? No one, not even my peer, has a right to condemn my "ceremonies" as *unauthorized* by Church "customs," without being required to point out these customs, and to prove *their* authority over my standard. In a time of fear and of passionate excitement, it is easy to vociferate, and insinuate general charges for effect; but not so easy, to be reasonable, and to keep in one's proper place. "Ceremonies and practices" have been "introduced," I know, wholly "*unauthorized*" by the "customs of *this Church*" as established by the English reformers. When *custom* was in keeping with *doctrine*, *sense* was brought to the aid of *Faith*, and made *subservient* to it. Then Church-buildings were viewed as offerings to God, and their costliness and magnificence were limited only by the means of the founders; then the Christian temple was made to symbolize the Christian Creed; the visible to give more vivid reality and impressiveness to the invisible; then an awful sense of Christ's presence in the blessed Sacrament was indicated by the prominence and adornments of the chancel, and especially the holy altar. Then it was manifest that the minister offered prayer to God, and not to the *people*, by kneeling towards the place where the incarnate God had taken up His special abode. Then humility and reverence in the people were apparent, in not turning their back upon the Priest, when he pronounced

over them absolution or blessing. Then their sense of propriety prevailed in moving them to make all ascription of praise to, and all professions of belief in the holy Trinity, with their faces to the altar. Then adherence to primitive Catholic Truth, was made manifest in their not virtually denying "the communion of saints," in failing to remember in their prayers and oblations, "the faithful departed."* Then the Priesthood was looked upon and revered as from God, and was distinguished from secular persons by a peculiar enjoined dress, and from one another in the sanctuary of God, by vestments suited to their several orders, and ministerial or priestly acts. Then in short, everything that met the eye in the Church, or in the individuals that severally worshipped there in their ranks, spoke of the majesty and incomprehensible mercy of God in Christ, and of deep reverence and self abasement and grateful love in God's people! And instead of fears lest he should give too much expression by ceremonial, to the several acts of God's condescending goodness, each worshipper seemed to deplore his ability to do only so little, and so unworthily, to unveil to all eyes the bright features of incarnate divinity and love! I acknowledge, dear brethren, and I do it with great sorrow of heart, that a great change in these respects has come over the face of God's people; that "ceremonies and practices" have been introduced in our degenerate age, "unauthorized by the customs of this Church:" this Church as it came forth from the furnace of trial with a humble heart, and holy life; a life adorned with the divine fruits of *true repentance, faith, and charity*; and a heart filled with the light of God's word, and honest in its submission and devotion to God's Church, as "the pillar and ground of the

* In the Prayer Book of Edward VI., prayers for the faithful dead are to be found.

truth," not professing to be guided by her Catholic judgment, when, in reality, it was following *self-will*. Yes, under the silent workings of that leaven of *Lutheranism and Puritanism*, infused into the ritual of the English Church, by foreign influence, crowding out her primitive catholicity to make room for modern inventions, fearful changes have taken place, not only in our ceremonial, but in our views, generating a low estimate of the Sacraments and Priesthood, and tending to an utter prostration of the external system of the Church, and an utter extinction of its true, original spirit; while an antagonistic system is becoming insensibly and gradually substituted and relied upon in her place. The main causes of this, I shall state in the conclusion of my letter; and only allude to it here, as a reason in my own mind, for an earnest endeavour, gradually to restore the "ceremonies and practices" of the Church in North Carolina to something like uniformity in themselves, and like agreement with the doctrines it professes, and the "customs" it is bound, by every principle and obligation of duty, to follow.

In this endeavor, however, your Bishop has carefully distinguished between comparatively unimportant things, and those which are identified with truth,—that have always been deemed essential to give distinctness and expression to the doctrines, sacraments and worship of the Church. And he here returns thanks to God for even some little success.

Churches are beginning to assume a more Church-like appearance—to be more in keeping with their divine and holy purpose. The altar of God is here and there drawn out of its obscurity, and the pulpit become a little more simple and retiring. The reverence of both clergy and people is manifestly increasing; the number of surplices is becoming greater; altars are less frequently made the resting

place for clerical arms and elbows. "The irreverent practice," to use the language of Bishop Hobart, "of receiving the consecrated bread *with the glove on the hand*" is decreasing, while a greater number receive agreeably to his recommendation, "in the palm of the right hand crossed over the left, and then lifted to the mouth."* Fewer backs are turned towards the priest at absolution and benediction. The voices are not quite so loud within the walls of the sanctuary,—neither the covered heads quite so numerous, while the rush to escape from Church is not quite so deafening. Fewer congregations regard their ministers as mere "hirelings," and insist upon *bidding for their services yearly*, as they do for their field-laborers.

There may have been some two or three other changes which have escaped my recollection, in the *irregularities*, not "customs" of this diocese, since my coming into the Episcopate. But not *one instance*, so far as I know, of the introduction, of what are usually styled "novelties,"—no unusual bowings, or crossings, or lighting of candles on the altar in the day time; and yet, "great agitation and alarm" about these things!

III. And now for "the plain violation of rubrics." And here I confess the *insinuation* of the committee, might, with perfect safety, have taken the form of a direct charge. As after mature reflection, I hesitate not to affirm, that no clergyman in this diocese is free from such a charge, and none less than the members of the committee themselves. What clergymen "often admonishes the people that they defer not the baptism of their children longer than the *first or second* Sunday after their birth?" And

* See Companion for Altar, note to p. 243.

† I thank God only *one parish* in the diocese adheres to this degrading practice.

further "warns them that without great cause, they procure not their children to be baptized at home?" What clergyman "on *coming to the font*, fills it, or has it filled, with pure water?" or "*pours* water upon the infant" at baptism? What clergyman having baptized a child *in private*, afterwards "certifies the same" in the form of the prayer book, before the congregation? What clergyman, in the examination of candidates for adult baptism, "exhorts them by prayer and *fasting* to prepare themselves for the receiving of the Holy Communion?" What priest, "when the Bishop gives knowledge for children to be brought unto him for their confirmation, *brings* or *sends* in writing with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his parish as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed?" What priest, after the gospel, "declares unto the people what holy days or *fasting days* are to be observed in the week following?" What priest, "causes the alms of the people to be received in a *decent basin*, and to be *reverently brought to him*, and *humbly* PRESENTS and places it on the holy table?" What priest, after the offertory, "places upon the table so much bread and wine as he shall think sufficient?" What priest takes care that the remaining consecrated bread and wine is "*reverently* eaten and drunk immediately after the blessing?" What priest, "to the intent, that his people may be always in *readiness to die*, whenever it shall please Almighty God to call them, *diligently from time to time* (and especially in the time of pestilence or other infectious disease) *exhorts* his parishioners to the often receiving the Holy Communion of the BODY and BLOOD of our SAVIOUR CHRIST?" What priest, in visiting the sick, "admonishes the sick person to *make his will*, and to *declare his debts*?" and "does NOT OMIT earnestly to MOVE such sick persons as are of ability TO BE LIBERAL TO THE POOR?"

What clergyman observes himself, and causes his people to observe, "the forty days of Lent,—the Ember Days, at the four seasons,—the three Rogation Days,—and all *Fridays* of the year, ON WHICH THE CHURCH REQUIRES SUCH A MEASURE OF ABSTINENCE AS IS MORE ESPECIALLY SUITED TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS AND EXERCISES OF DEVOTION?" When each member of the committee, and each clergyman in the diocese, can declare before God, that in none of these respects he has failed to come up to the letter or *spirit* of the rubrical law of the Church, then, and not till then, may he consistently "*be very intolerant of such as violate the rubrics.*" He must not violate them to answer his own ends, and then complain of others for following his example. The truth is, that while your Bishop would discourage every wilful and needless violation of the rubrics, he would, at the same time, express his conviction that the Church intended them rather as general directions than as inflexible laws,—to be strictly followed however, where circumstances will admit of it; but to be departed from, where, in the candid and filial judgment of the priest, her great leading purposes demand it, as they sometimes unquestionably *do*. While, however, I say that all my clergy, more or less, violate the rubrics, I am bound to add my belief that no one either does, or has done it, needlessly, or with a view to depart from the faith or worship of the Church.

IV. The last cause of excitement suggested by the committee, viz: that which relates to the society of the Holy Cross, will be adverted to in the conclusion.

But it is said; "The Bishop surely gave up in his charge some of his previous views and teachings." Here is the mistake, and a mistake which is doing great injustice to me and injury to my diocese. Your Bishop is ever ready to yield anything for peace, which is not

identified with essential truth. But to admit that he had yielded in this case, would be to admit that he had been *unfaithful*, where his conscience testifies before God to his strict *fidelity*; would be to say, that he had given up *that* which he *never held*. He did, however, being sick, what he never would have done, being well; he allowed himself to treat, *as if lawful*, an unlawful, though *implied, censure*; and an invasion of his just rights from which the merest respect for his office should have shielded him. But he turns to his diocese, and thanks God that he can turn to them with the utmost confidence of support, though not perhaps of entire agreement with himself, and say to them, Brethren, your Bishop has not retreated *one step*!—has not and will not (for any consideration this side the grave) yield one word or syllable of what he has *really* taught. For he believes it identified with his *own* and *your* salvation, as he believes it bound upon his conscience by solemn oath at his consecration.

V.

Permit me, Brethren, to go back a little in our history, as a branch of the One Catholic Church, and trace out very briefly some of the causes which have led me to my present convictions and course.

All national Church reforms are conducted under strong feelings, and undue *bias*. The mind of the nation is impelled by some great and engrossing idea, which, for the time, sinks every thing else below its proper level, and thus leads to an exaggeration of error and an overstatement of antagonistic truth. So that much of what is done under national excitement to meet a particular exigency, though comparatively harmless at the time, often tends, in another age, and under other influences, to the opposite and equally dangerous extreme from that which was originally sought to be shunned. The reformation

in England, however loudly called for, by the corruptions of the time, was not wholly exempt from the evils to which I have adverted. The political, and indeed *personal* questions which obtruded themselves into the ecclesiastical struggle with Rome, so averted and warped the mind of the nation, as, in the settlement of religious truth, to allow of a decided infusion of leaven from a foreign source into the Anglican formularies of doctrine. Coming from a system in Germany at variance in most of its essential features with the Sacramental system of the English ritual, it was soon found to breed jealousy and strife. Its working was aided too by the presence of those eminent Lutheran or Calvinistic divines that found their way at an early period of the *Reformation*, into the Universities and Theological chairs of England. The struggle between these antagonist principles—the Lutheran and Sacramental, soon resulted in demands for change in the Book of Common Prayer. One change had hardly been yielded when another was called for, demonstrating the growing conformity to the Lutheran or Puritan mind. Thus the once harmonious system gathered by our Anglican forefathers, with so much toil and suffering from the Creeds and Liturgies of truly Catholic antiquity, was gradually deprived of its oneness and strength, and greatly diluted in some of its essential truth. One feature after another disappeared in the various attempts to adapt it to what was really “another Gospel.”

Among these, the doctrine of “sacredotal absolution,” was cast into the shade, when its true and proper form was removed from general use, into “the Order for the Visitation of the Sick.” Besides the result of such alterations in the Book of Common Prayer, under foreign pressure, another principle, hardly less prejudicial to the truth, was at work, engendered in England herself, from “the union of Church and

State." The effect of it was to lower, in the estimation of the people, the Church from its true character, as the mystical body of Christ, to, at least, a semi-political establishment. So that in less than two centuries, if we may believe the testimony of Charles Leslie and his faithful kindred in the faith, the real nature of the sacraments was lost sight of, in the virtual erasement from the national mind, of that grand article in the creed—"THE ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH." And what made the case still more sad and discouraging, was the fact, that the great body of such as held to the sacraments at all, stripped them of their *vitality*, presenting merely "the outward, visible sign," with no "inward, spiritual grace." The effect was to turn those that were really "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," away from the rich gifts of heavenly grace in the Church, to those systems which gave to their uninstructed minds, fairer promise of spiritual life and nourishment. No wonder, that the altars of our Church were deserted for the earnest, though unauthorized teachings of dissent, while the Church itself, was borne still farther and farther, from the spirit, and language, and doctrine of primitive antiquity, as embodied in the Liturgy of the Anglican Reformers.

In this country, with the same antagonistic power to contend with, as a Church, in the absence of all immediate Episcopal supervision, with a still greater proclivity to dissent; and this evil greatly aggravated by the circumstances in which we were left by the revolution, it is certainly no matter of surprise, that the same result, as in the mother country, and even to a more alarming degree, should have been realized. If you demand evidence, you have it in the conflicts of Seabury and White, and a few other faithful men, with the spirit of heresy, as developed in the first general Convention; developed in efforts to destroy the fundamental *faith*, and cut off our in-

fant Church from the favor of God, and the fellowship of the "faithful." If you demand evidence, you have it in the history of Hobart, the history of one unceasing struggle against the disparagement of the sacraments, and the invasion of the just powers and rights of the priesthood, both within and without our communion. If you demand evidence, return to the stern conflicts of your own Ravenscroft. Listen to his earnest expostulations, and warnings, and entreaties on the first great truth he unfolded to you after his consecration—"THE ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH!" Open your eyes, and ears, and hearts to the affecting appeal he made to you, almost from his grave—"Pardon me, my brethren, if I seem to you to anticipate an *ideal danger*. I am, indeed, no prophet, to draw from futurity its hidden results; but, as YOUR WATCHMAN IN CHIEF, and charged *with all the interests of the Church*, I have to keep an eye upon *remote* as well as immediate consequences, and to give the warning from the quarter whence danger threatens.

"Our danger, at the present time, seems to me to arise from a *decline in the spirit and power of religion*, from loose and erroneous views of the prescribed and covenanted character of revealed religion—from consequent indifference to our distinctive principles—and from an over-conformity with the spirit of the world, which, if not arrested, must soon and certainly produce that *moral death* which precedes the removal of our light from the candlestick. Against this danger, what is to be the resort, my brethren? Anxiously have I cast about for the most effectual remedy, and my judgment can find that no where, under God, but in a 'return to first principles.' These, through his blessing, may yet revive us to the power of godliness, and sustain us against the opposition of our enemies. Yea, turn those enemies into friends and favorers of our righteous cause, through the power of

truth plainly announced, and faith feebly exhibited in practice.

“Pardon me, also, if I seem to any to have spoken more forcibly than the occasion called for. Alas! my brethren, that the *desire to conciliate where experience demonstrates* that concession only increases demand, should have so prevailed *as to enervate and neutralize the truth by the qualified and doubting terms* in which it is expressed! But a more powerful motive than the fear or the praise of men constrains me. This may be my last address to a convention of this diocese,—of which frequently recurring disease gives serious notice. I, therefore, have to speak as a dying man to those *for whom* he has to give account, recalling them as Christians and Churchmen to those pure principles of *primitive truth and order*, which alone give to the religion of the Gospel its practical importance as the prescribed institution of the wisdom of God for the salvation of sinners,—which alone give to the *visible Church, ministry and sacraments*, any definite purpose in the economy of grace—which alone give to the faith of the Gospel its *covenanted character*, and to the hope of eternal life, through the merits of the divine Saviour, *the support of divine assurance.*” Vol. 1, p. 466.

It was just after the death of this true and good Bishop, that the Anglican Church was aroused from her deep slumber, and called up to a consideration of her office and gifts by the stirring voice of a few holy men at the University of Oxford and its neighborhood. The simplicity, earnestness, faithfulness, humility, and adaptedness to the yearnings of many minds, of the Oxford Tracts, gave them ready access to almost every fireside and heart in England, and soon made them welcome messengers of love and hope to our shores. Embodying those first principles of sound and primitive theology which had been taught more distinctly among us than in our mother

Church, carrying them out to their just consequences and entering more into details, these and kindred writings showed us our gifts, our vows, our duties, our dangers, our rewards, and the rugged way of self-denying holiness which leads to them. They set before us in yet clearer and more attractive light, our holy mother—THE ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH—claiming our love and submission, and offering her sacramental gifts—her safe guidance—her divine assurance of eternal life to the faithful in Christ Jesus. The effect was great—such as might have been looked for in an age when sinners, inquiring what they must do to be saved, had been sent back for an answer to their own burdened and trembling hearts. “The members of Christ” felt with new force that, instead of being left to grope their lonely way through the mazes of sense and reason, they had already “come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.” The change promised fair for the cause of holiness and truth. But, as was to have been expected with ardent and honest-hearted young men, errors of judgment were committed, and a check was given to the rising truth. The most violent opposition was awakened—every advantage was taken of misjudgment—calumny was employed—combinations formed—the powers in high places invoked—and every available influence was brought to bear against the authors and advocates of this fresh Revival of the Church-mind to true CHURCH-PRINCIPLES. It is not wonderful that some faint-hearted men, under such discouragement, should

have weakly abandoned their position, and deserted their Church. But it is wonderful, that from this, any sound minded Churchman would have argued that the position must be necessarily *false* and *unfilial*; since the very effort had been to show the earnest and longing heart, that in our branch of the Church were all the gifts and capacities for holiness, and for an assurance of salvation, that were originally entrusted to the Church of the living God. But such was the effect of the lamented desertions to Rome. A *panic* was produced, and "Puseyism," as "the sacramental system" was styled, by way of reproach, was charged with an essential alliance with "Romanism."

A sad fruit of this reaction in the public mind, was to bring undeserved suspicion upon such as continued firm to their principles, who felt bound in conscience to hold to the truth of God, no matter what might be the changes in their fellow-men. This suspicion was increased, however, by the imprudences, and often follies, of young persons, and in some cases of young clergymen, who, though sincere and filial, yet being too much without spiritual counsel and guidance, became *selfwilled*. This, through, what always seemed to me, the misjudgment of their superiors, was often visited with harshness, or at least, not with that "charity which suffereth long and is kind." Examinations became unusually severe, and sometimes inquisitorial in their character. This produced discouragement, and occasionally, what it should not have done, an undutiful spirit towards the Church. In this state of things, a number of young clergymen, knowing the views of your Bishop, came to him, when in New-York at the General Convention of 1847, for sympathy and counsel. Wishing to devote themselves, soul and body, to Christ, agreeable to the "Evangelical Counsels," they offered me their services, and begged to be allowed to act under

my Episcopal guidance, so soon as arrangements could be made for their transfer to my diocese. No definite answer was given, but an appointment made for conference with them on a future day, and an opportunity was thus given for consultation with some of my brethren. My young friends met me as agreed upon, to the number of five or six. To prevent all misapprehension, my first address to them was substantially as follows: "Young gentlemen, if you come to me as faithful sons of our branch of the Church, asking my spiritual counsel and guidance, I will receive you, and do all in my power to encourage and strengthen your catholic views and desires, so far as they are in agreement with our Liturgy, fairly interpreted by the Creeds and Councils of the primitive Church. But, if you have any views beyond our Church, and hope to be countenanced in them by me, I must, at once, undeceive you, by declining any further interview." They all declared their fidelity to our branch of the Church, and I consented to receive them. Just previously to this, a Society had been formed at Valle Crucis, called "the Holy Cross," the *objects* and *duties* of which were as follows; I copy literally from the original document:

"*The objects of the Society* shall be the promotion of personal holiness, of the Sacramental system of the Church, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, and of Catholic Unity."

"The Society" was to "consist of *three orders*."

1st. Perpetual members, who must be unmarried men.

2d. Other persons living in the institution.

3d. Persons not residing at Valle Crucis."

The general duties were common, and were named as follows; I give every word.

"*Duties of the Orders*.

It shall be the duties of all the orders to cultivate in themselves a spirit of deep humility, and charity, by calmness and patience under reproaches and suf-

ferings ; by cheerful submission to the Church in her appointed fasts, and daily public and private prayers ; and by constant acts of self denial and almsgiving ; also to inculcate upon the minds of all within their influence, the sacramental system of the Church, particularly Baptismal Regeneration, the Real Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and Sacerdotal Absolution ; and also to promote the unity of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, by excluding sectarian prejudices from their minds, and avoiding sectarian language in their conversation,* and by uniting in a common prayer, that God may speedily bring together in one mind and one heart the scattered members of Christ's Body."

After reading this summary, as the basis of their duty, I enjoined upon them the necessity, in order to peace of mind and efficiency in action, of abstaining from all books whose teaching was not in agreement and sympathy with our Church.

I appeal to my Diocese, and ask whether this furnishes evidence of the charge, now in busy circulation, of a *concealed purpose* on my part of bringing any foreign system or influence upon the diocese, either through the society above named, or by means of the religious community at Valle Crucis ?

If there be any teaching or influence in this community other than decidedly and triumphantly favorable to the interests of the Church I have not the penetration to detect it. Hearing that a little

* It is said the Bishop never speaks or writes against the *Romanists*. Answer. (1.) There are enough who do it, without him. (2.) It does no good to our own Church. (3.) They who speak against others are very likely to speak falsely. (4.) It is against that prayer for catholic unity which we are taught to make every time we join in our Service. (5.) However great may be their errors, *Romanists* belong to the *body of Christ*, and hence to the *same family* with us. And it is neither lawful to speak against the members of Christ's body, nor in good taste to speak against members of our own family.

manual had been taken to the low-country containing objectionable matter, I at once examined into the cause, and found that there had been no designed violations of our standards, nor disobedience to my directions, but that the expressions, which, upon looking over the manual a year ago, I had ordered to be stricken out, were, in this particular instance, left in, owing to the absence of the boy who had copy of the manual in question at the time, and his forgetfulness after his return. The circumstance, however, led me, at once, to a minute examination into the books of instruction, and manuscript lectures employed in teaching. I find, from unbiassed sources, that no text book has been used by a candidate for orders other than the list set forth by the House of Bishops; and that nothing has been taught beyond the true and proper system of the Church.

It will be recollected that for years I have sought to induce you, Brethren, as a diocese, to take the responsibility of this institution, and particularly, that I did this by a public proposal at the convention in Newbern, 1847. My efforts, however, were vain; and I was left alone to stagger under burdens, which, but for the affectionate confidence and timely assistance of a few personal friends, would have crushed me to the earth. And now, that, by strict retrenchment and economy, I have reached the point, by God's good providence, of ultimate relief, and, through the unusual, and really surprising (if you measure them by this age) self-sacrifices of two or three young clergymen, have been able to give to the institution something like stability and efficiency, I cannot see upon what principle of Christ this excellent and much needed charity is sought to be arrested at this moment of its success, by unfounded and exaggerated charges. Thank God, it *cannot* be arrested; His wisdom will frustrate the devices of the adversary, and His power defend the treasures of the poor!

I have adverted to these things in this place, not to shield myself from charges or surmises of false doctrine, (these I am prepared to answer at the proper tribunal) but to rebuke the unmanly and unworthy *suspicion* of an attempt *covertly* to bring upon my diocese an influence unfriendly to the Church.

Before dismissing this point, however, allow me to put to you one serious question. Who, among the young clergymen that for the last two years have joined our little band, has officiously intruded into the general concerns of the diocese, or done ought but work hard, and faithfully, and successfully, in our most discouraging fields of labor?

But I have detained you long, dear brethren, and must hasten to the conclusion of my letter. When the re-action against the Oxford Tracts took place, I narrowly and anxiously watched the effect upon my own diocese; which, as I thought, had, in the main, sympathized with their doctrinal views, simply because these views were considered a faithful and earnest exhibition of the true doctrines of the Church. It was matter of grief to me, therefore, to find some minds of high order, that had seemed strongly impressed, not only with the *truth*, but *essential importance* of these doctrines, gradually yielding under popular pressure, to the idea of their danger, and ready to acquiesce in the justice of regarding those as *disturbers* of the peace of the Church who continued to advocate them. As your Bishop felt himself bound in conscience to do this, he, of course, fell, more or less, with those who thought with him, under this oppressive censure. How far he has been justly liable to it, he leaves it with the Church to judge. Now, what was his course? Convinced as he was, and is, that, under an element of Lutheranism early infused into our system, a principle has been perpetually at work

directly adverse to its true, sacramental character, he might, surely, as a faithful son of the Church, have sought to arouse her to such changes, as should, in his judgment, tend to arrest the evil and help us back to the ground on which the English Reformers originally stood. But from this he abstained from motives of prudence, and a desire to give no countenance to that spirit of change which seems bent on depriving us of the last vestige of the sacraments, or of sacerdotal functions. But further, believing as he did and does, that the *senses* were designed by Almighty God as handmaids to the *faith*, and that the ordinary arrangements of the churches in his diocese tended to beget irreverence and strengthen error, he might well have insisted upon such changes as, in his view, the truth and honor of God demanded. But he abstained from all, save an encouraging word, as proper occasion offered, lest opposition should be awakened to that which seemed to be commending itself by its own manifest propriety.

What then has brought your Bishop under the reproach of needlessly disturbing his diocese? Listen to his words of truth and soberness. He may have misjudged; (for who does not sometimes err?) but he claims to have acted with a good conscience both towards God and man.

In casting his eye about, to discover, if possible, the cause of this declension in manly zeal for the faith, he perceived, or thought he perceived, a proportionate declension in the spirit and power of godliness. Many who had seemed to be quickened to a more earnest self-discipline, and aroused to efforts for higher spiritual life, were found to have gradually relapsed to their former state; and to be more anxious for ease and favor among men, than to gain, through "much tribulation, the eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God." The discovery brought great sorrow and searchings of heart. Your bishop felt that

he had done his work too slightly—that he had encouraged peace, where, perhaps, there was no peace; that he had been satisfied with too low a standard of holiness for himself and his people; that there must be a fatal want in the soul, where there was so little love and courage for the truth. And, after most prayerful inquiry, he believed that want to consist mainly in *an inadequate perception of the nature and value of the sacraments*, and hence of *the necessity of a deep and more earnest and self-humbling preparation, especially for coming to the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ*; he believed that from this want many, *under the blinding and stupefying power of habits of wilful deadly sin*, might be accustomed, with his ministerial sanction, to come to the Lord's Supper *only to eat and drink damnation to themselves*. The thought was appalling—it was prompting—it furnished, (as your bishop hopes for mercy at last,) the only motive in the preparation and publication of his *seven sermons*, on “the obedience of faith,” and his *Pastoral* on “the priestly office.” In doing which he boldly avers, that he has gone beyond no doctrine of the Church—sought to introduce no new practice—to infringe no man's liberty—to impose no additional term of communion; but simply to bring to notice means of repentance provided, but out of use—to take the mask from post-baptismal sin—to arouse the burdened conscience and point it for relief to the source which Christ has ordained, and our Church has sanctioned and recommended. Whether he deserves for his effort (poor indeed and unworthy of the awful crisis,) the rebuke he has received, God and the Church will judge! Whatever may be the verdict he will be satisfied. If in the pride of his heart he has sought the praise of men, he deserves to be humbled! But he has the satisfaction of feeling that, if through the mercy of God, a few humble, earnest souls shall have been by his most undeserving instru-

mentality, plucked from the snare of the devil, the reward will be far richer, than a consciousness that his work was welcomed by empty and unthinking popular applause.

I know, it is said, that the bishop is reaping the reward of having gone against the protestant feelings and views of the diocese. His answer is, that he has gone, in his efforts, *for truth* and *against sin*, and that while he maintains that our branch of the Church has within her the elements of all necessary truth, he cannot shut his eyes to the fact, that she has in her that too which through the power of *self-will*, restrains the truth, often gives the reins to ungodliness and wrong. But while he feels this, and does what he can to correct it, he has never been guilty of wanton inflictions, captious criticism, or illiberal judgment. He appeals with confidence to his clergy, to defend him from charges of this kind, and with equal confidence to the laity, to shield him from suspicions of officious intermeddling in secular matters, or attempted unfairness in the inculcation of religious duty.

I am aware that there may be excitement *as the consequence of my course*; but I feel that "fever" is safer than "paralysis," and certainly better than "death." While I admit, however, that my efforts have called up opposition, I am bound to express my conviction, that a fear for "Protestanism" has had little to do in the movement. In our age deep worldliness, political ambition, overgrown pride, jealousy of restraint, fear of authority, and reckless licentiousness, have conspired with sectarian bitterness, to shut out the oneness of truth—the inflexibility of principle, the fixedness of God's law; and to make every thing, in heaven and earth, subject to the waywardness of the human mind—the caprice of circumstances—the demand of popular favor. What wonder then, when man is convicted of sin—is called to humil-

ity—to submission—called to admit the sovereignty of an incarnate God—to admit the only way of salvation in His Church—to admit the authority of His priesthood—the necessity of His sacraments—the urgency of His discipline—the inflexibility of His laws—to admit that “without holiness” no one can have part in His eternal fellowship; that when he is called to this his heart should rebel, in this age of rebellion, and be aroused against the Messenger of heaven—“the rightful steward of the mysteries of God!” But what then? Is the minister of heaven, to withhold his message, because it is distasteful to the children of this world? What is this, but to counsel faith to be silent, when her testimony is most needed? To halt in her onward progress, when her firm and steady step alone can disarm resistance, and give triumph to the uplifted cross? To be cowardly and sparing of herself at the very moment, when the honor of Christ, and the eternal safety of man, demand the highest courage and energy and self-sacrifice. And what is to be gained? We, as individuals, may acquire the title of *liberal*, *conciliating* and *prudent*! But what do we gain for heaven? What for our Master, and His Church on earth? Where has she made advance by waiting for the world to welcome her? Did the apostles and martyrs and confessors make achievements by waiting for the favor of the world? Go back a step, and inquire what were the signs accompanying the birth of the Christian faith? Did its saintly forerunner consort with the great, and court the world?—waiting upon its smiles, and attending upon its will, in his solemn call to *repentance*! Did he remain silent in the wilderness of Jordan, till the power of pride and lust, and covetousness, and ambition, and oppression, and all ungodliness in high places had given way, and made it safe for him to utter his stern rebukes, and expose hypocrisy? Did the divine, the

blessed founder of the faith, delay His glorious work, till mankind dismissed their hatred to holiness, and consented to withhold from Him the hand of violence, and the instruments of cruelty and death? And shall we, who bear in our foreheads the sign of His crucifixion, shrink from the fellowship of His sufferings?

Brethren of the clergy, once bound to me, as "with one heart and one mind;" once striving together with me hand in hand for "the faith once delivered to the saints;" will ye not hear my voice, and stand firm with me once more against the enemy of truth, of God and righteousness, in this evil day? All signs admonish us that it is the *last* day. The struggle will soon be over; let us not faint nor be discouraged, but be willing to take to ourselves *the whole armour of God!* Power is committed unto us for the Salvation of men,—"*mysteries, manifold gifts,*" are entrusted to us. Let us stir up the gift that is in us, and magnify our office. Listen, once more, to that captain of our host who has passed out of the shadow of this world—the lion-hearted Ravenscroft! "The *unity* of the Church; its *distinctive character, its religious purposes, the authority of its ministry*,—these," says he, "are the points about which a most *lamentable ignorance* prevails, and most *unfounded opinions* are becoming established, not only among Episcopalians, but at large. To permit this ignorance to be undisturbed is to be false to our ordination vows—false to our acknowledged principles, and false to the souls committed to our care. If these principles are woven into the very framework of our polity—impregnable in their truth—essential to the great work we have in hand, let us not appear *ashamed of them, or weakly afraid of the consequences*, and thus become parties to *that miserable delusion which weakens us as a body, and strengthens the ranks of our adversaries*, and I will fearlessly say,

weakens the cause of true religion, by tacitly owning one division after another, till the *great master-principle of the Church of God*, its UNITY, is merged in the mass of Christian names and swallowed up by the indifference and infidelity thus fostered. In coming to this duty, however, my reverend brethren, it is my part to warn you to set your faces like a flint against the misrepresentations and reproaches of pretended friends, real enemies, who will be sure to combine against you, and throw every obstacle in your way. But eternity alone can furnish the reward or inflict the punishment which await the faithful or unfaithful *stewards of the mysteries of God*. You watch for *souls*, and for *souls* you must give an account—not with the loss or gain of worldly honors, dignities, or emoluments, but with your *own souls*! There is no alternative—no escape from this condition on which you hold and exercise your holy office.”

Ever your faithful friend

And servant in Christ,

L. SILLIMAN IVES.

VALLE CRUCIS, Aug. 8, 1849.

“Who is not a *heretic*.

“HE WHO HATH WILLINGLY SUBSCRIBED TO THE WORD OF GOD, ATTESTED IN THE EVERLASTING SCRIPTURES—TO ALL THE PRIMITIVE CREEDS—TO THE FOUR GENERAL COUNCILS—TO THE COMMON JUDGMENT OF THE FATHERS FOR SIX HUNDRED YEARS AFTER CHRIST—(which we of our Reformation religiously *profess to do*)—THIS MAN MAY POSSIBLY ERR IN TRIFLES, BUT HE CANNOT

BE A HERETIC.

Bp. HALL

by

Bishop RAVENSCROFT.

In regard to the substance of my Charge to the Clergy at the last Convention, I desire distinctly to avow my adherence to it, as my belief, always and still.

NOTE.

THE FOLLOWING IS IN ANSWER TO A POPULAR OBJECTION TO ABSOLUTION.

If it be urged, that the minister cannot know the heart of man ; and should he, therefore, grant absolution to one who deceived him by false representations of his faith and repentance, it would be of no avail at the tribunal of heaven ; it may be very true, yet it will not detract from the comfort and value of absolution to those who are sincere. A patient may deceive his physician by a false enunciation of symptoms, and his life be the forfeit, but this is no proof of the physician's general ignorance of his art, nor any evidence that his services are not generally effective of their purpose. *All the ordinances of christianity* are administered without certain knowledge of their effect in any individual case ; yet this is deemed no reason for withholding them from all, or of pronouncing them altogether useless. They are, by the appointment of *God, conditionally effective*, and so are conditionally administered. In like manner is the power and agency of the ministry intended to be *positively efficient*. Such is the rule. And although a just and merciful *God* will never sanction an unrighteous act of his ministers ; still, the general rule, whereby he ratifies their faithful agency according to his promise, is not thereby annulled. Any objection, therefore, brought against ministerial power in the various forms of absolution, from the possibility of its unjust or erroneous exercise, and that in such a case, *God* will reverse the judgment of his servants, will be of equal weight against any ministerial function whatever, whose authority is derived from my text and its parallel passages.

If they be interpreted to mean no more than simple admission into the Church and excommunication therefrom, or only the mildest form of censure ; yet, in all these, particularly in admission to the Holy Communion, there is liability to error in the minister, because he cannot scan the hearts of others. Yet there still remains the promise connected with this ministerial function, whatever it might be, that what is done by the ministry on earth, shall be ratified in heaven. The same difficulty, if it be a difficulty, will attend every mode of interpreting these passages, which supposes that they contain any authority for ministerial action."—*Rev. M. A. Curtis' Ser. on Sacramental Absolut. p. 23.*

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Auricular Confession.

AURICULAR CONFESSION

IN THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH ;

CONSIDERED

In a Series of Letters

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND IN NORTH CAROLINA.

:

BY

A PROTESTANT EPISCOPALIAN.

NEW-YORK :

GEO. P. PUTNAM, 155 BROADWAY.

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AURICULAR CONFESSION.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

I cannot wonder at the solicitude you manifest with reference to the condition of ecclesiastical affairs in the diocese of North Carolina. There is indeed, as you state, a marvellous change therein since you and I, with others whom we love, watched with the deepest interest the struggles of the infant Church, and, under the guidance of our dear old father Ravenscroft, labored to the extent of our ability, in restoring the long abandoned temples and sublime ritual of our fathers.

The queries you propound to me, and the subjects on which you do me the honor to ask my opinion, appear, in their consideration, to fall under one or other of the following heads :

1. What is the doctrine of confession and absolution as held by the Church of Rome ? What its legitimate consequences ? What the objections to it ?

2. What is the doctrine as held by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States ?

3. How near an approximation to the Romish doctrine has been made in modern teaching in North Carolina ?

4. How far can certain claims of Episcopal authority and prerogative be sustained under the constitution and canons of our own branch of the Church ?

In proceeding to the discussion of these several particulars, my principal end is to fulfil toward you the obligations created by a friendship existing from our boyhood. I shall endeavor to condense what I have to say into as small a compass as is consistent with perspicuity ; and as my time is not entirely at my command, I must of necessity devote to this work such intervals only as I can snatch from other duties. A compliance with your request to know my opinions will, therefore, I fear, unavoidably subject you to the perusal not merely of one epistle, but of several. I shall be happy if they afford you either interest or satisfaction.

1. What is the doctrine of confession and absolution as held by the Church of Rome, what its legitimate consequences, and what are the objections to it ?

As preliminary to what follows, suffer me to remind you that the true and only question *now* before us relates to the avowed and published creed of a certain portion of our fellow-men, claiming to be, *par excellence*, the Church of Christ ; and as such authoritatively propounding to us what we must believe touching confession and absolution, on peril of our damnation.

We are not now to inquire into the lawfulness or existence of confession itself; we are not now to ask (supposing in earlier times confession of sin did obtain) whether it was general or particular; but we are concerned now simply with the doctrine of confession and absolution *as held by the Church of Rome*.

First, then, what is that doctrine?

In the year 1215, under the popedom of Innocent III., met the Council of Lateran. The 21st canon of this Council enjoined in substance that all the faithful of both sexes, after they came to years of discretion, should *privately* confess their sins to their own priest, at least once a year, and endeavor faithfully to perform the penance enjoined on them; and after this they should come to the sacrament, at least at Easter, unless the priest for some reasonable cause judged it fit for them to abstain for that time. And whoever did not perform this was to be excommunicated, and put out of the Church; and if he died was not to be allowed Christian burial.*

The Council of Trent sat under the pontificate of five Popes, from 1545 to 1563, nearly eighteen years, and was assembled for the express purpose, among other things, of setting forth truly the doctrine of the Church of Rome. It held twenty-five sessions, and its decrees are acknowledged as authoritative by the whole Church of Rome.

In the fourteenth session, it was thus declared:

* See Dupin, vol. ii. p. 95. Of this canon, the Roman writer Fleury remarks, "This is the *first canon*, so far as I know, which imposes the general obligation of sacramental confession."

Canon 6. "Whoever shall deny that sacramental confession was instituted by Divine command, or that it is necessary to salvation ; or shall affirm that the practice of secretly confessing to the priest alone, as it has been ever observed by the Catholic Church, and is still observed, is foreign to the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention ; *let him be accursed.*

Canon 7. Whoever shall affirm that in order to obtain forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of penance, it is not necessary by Divine command to confess all and every mortal sin which occurs to the memory after due and diligent premeditation, including secret offences, and those which have been committed against the last two precepts of the decalogue, and those circumstances which change the species of sin ;—but that such confession is only useful for the instruction and consolation of the penitent, and was formerly observed merely as a canonical satisfaction imposed upon him ; or shall affirm that those who labor to confess all their sins wish to leave nothing to be pardoned by the Divine mercy ; or, finally, that it is not lawful to confess venial sins ; *let him be accursed.*

Canon 8. Whoever shall affirm that the confession of every sin according to the custom of the Church, is impossible, and merely a human tradition, which the pious should reject ; or that all Christians, of both sexes, are not bound to observe the same once a year, according to the constitution of the great Council of Lateran ; and therefore that the faithful in Christ are to be persuaded not to confess in Lent ; *let him be accursed.*

This is the teaching of the Church of Rome on the subject of *confession*, taken from her acknowledged standards.

What now is her view of *absolution*? Let us return to the Council of Trent.

Canon 3. Whoever shall affirm that the words of the Lord our Saviour, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c., are not to be understood of the power of forgiving and retaining sins in the sacrament of penance, &c.; *let him be accursed.*

Canon 9. Whoever shall affirm that the priest's sacramental absolution is not a *judicial* act, but only a *ministry*, to declare and pronounce that the sins of the party confessing are forgiven, so that he believes himself to be absolved, even though the priest should not absolve seriously, but in jest; *let him be accursed.*

A few passages from the Catechism of the Council of Trent will conclusively show that the clergy of Rome claim to themselves the power of forgiving sins:

"Our sins are forgiven by the absolution of the priest. The voice of the priest, who is legitimately constituted a minister for the remission of sins, is to be heard as that of Christ himself, who said to the lame man, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.'"—p. 239.

"The absolution of the priest, which is expressed in words, seals the remission of sins *which it accomplishes in the soul.*"—p. 240.

"Unlike the authority given to the priests of the old law, to *declare* the leper cleansed from his leprosy, the power with which the priests of the new law are invested is not *simply*

to declare that sins are forgiven, but, as the ministers of God, really to absolve from sin.”—p. 242.

“There is no sin however grievous, no crime however enormous, or however frequently repeated, which penance does not remit.”—p. 243.

“Without the intervention of penance we cannot obtain, or even hope for pardon.”—p. 244.

“The penitent must also submit himself to the judgment of the priest, who is the Vicegerent of God, to enable him to award a punishment proportionate to his guilt.”—p. 245.

If to these extracts from the Catechism of Trent, I add the form of the *Confiteor*, and of absolution, I believe we shall have a fair view of what Rome holds and teaches on this subject. The first is as follows:

“I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever a Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to thee, father, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my most grievous fault: therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever a Virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and thee, father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.”

The form of absolution is this:—“*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis, in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti:*” “I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The essential part here is, *Ego te absolvo*, I absolve thee. The words, *absolvat te Christus*, may Christ absolve thee, or

absolvat te Deus, may God absolve thee, are held to be invalid by the divines of Rome; because, say they, the priest does not *pray for pardon*, but, on the contrary, *bestows a pardon*, authoritatively and officially. Thus one of the most eminent, Peter Dens, whose writings were selected as the text-book in Theology at Maynooth, furnishes us with the following:—"What is the sense of the sacramental form, *ego te absolvo*, &c.? *Ans.* The sense is this: I judicially bestow on thee the grace of the remission of all thy sins, or grace of itself remissive of all thy sins, as far as is in the power of my ministry. This sense of the form cannot be admitted, *I declare thee absolved*, because it is condemned by the Council of Trent, sess. 14, c. 9."*

From these extracts, it appears to me that we may fairly deduce the following as points affirmed by the Church of Rome on the subject of Confession and Absolution.

1. That sins are to be divided into mortal and venial.
2. That confession of sin is a *sacrament*, instituted by divine command.
3. That this confession must be *auricular*; that is, made secretly to a priest, and may and must include a particular enumeration of all sins of all sorts, with an unreserved exposure and submission of the whole heart to the inspection and guidance of the priest, who has power as God's Vicegerent to absolve and forgive sins; and who in absolution acts *judicially* and not *ministerially*, being infallibly directed in his judgment by the Holy Ghost.

* *Theologia Moralis et Dogmatica*, vol. vi. p. 17. Dublin Edition, 1832.

4. That *such* confession was always the doctrine and usage of the church of Christ.

5. That such confession is *essential to salvation*.

6. That it is to be made for the purpose of obtaining a sacramental absolution of all sins committed *after baptism*.

Having thus ascertained, from the accredited standards of the Church of Rome, what her tenets are, in my next I will examine what are the grounds of objection to them.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

The first position of the Church of Rome is, that sins are to be divided into mortal and venial. If by this, no more were meant than that all sins which man can commit, are not equal in enormity or degree, I know not any intelligent Christian who would refuse his assent to such a proposition. Or, if by venial sins, they intend merely those daily frailties and infirmities to which even good and virtuous men are subject, and against which they habitually watch and strive and pray, I suppose the distinction they have made would be generally recognized. But the Church of Rome, I apprehend, means much more than this. This distinction into mortal and venial forms a necessary part of her *system* of auricular confession, penance and absolution. In her doctrine of penance, she teaches that there is a whole class of sins which she terms *venial* ; and the peculiar characteristic of which is, that they may claim God's pardon as of right : such sins as, if all of them were combined, would not be equal to one *mortal* sin. They hold that these venial sins, even if we commit them, cannot put us out of God's

favor; and that by no possibility can any man, on account of *them*, perish eternally.*

This is the Romanist's view of what he calls *venial* sins.

Now to this view there are very grave, not to say conclusive objections; indeed, there is at least one which is conclusive:—*the Scripture teaches no such doctrine concerning any sin, or class of sins.* It makes no distinction between such as *may* and such as *must* be pardoned by our Heavenly Father: for this is in truth the great feature in the Romish distinction between mortal and venial sins. On the contrary, the Bible expressly tells us what, on a contemplation of the Divine nature, mere human reason teaches us could not be otherwise, viz.:—that God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity;” and that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” It shows us, therefore, the condemnation of *all* sin, and the necessity of pardon for all; but not one word can be found intimating that certain sins do not remove us from God's favor and friendship (that is, do not displease Him); and still less that the pardon of any sins may be demanded of God as a matter of right, which they certainly may be if, as Dens says, “*remissio peccati venialis est debita*,” remission of venial sin is due or a debt.

Further: No such distinction as Rome has made between mortal and venial sins, is to be found in the early Christian writers.

* *Quamvis remissio peccati venialis sit ex misericordia Dei, illa tamen, suo modo, debita est homini justo illam petenti: nam peccatum veniale non tollit divinam amicitiam.* Theologia moralis et dogmatica Petri Dens, vol. i. p. 364. Dublin edition. 1832.

Further still : Reason condemns any such distinction. If God be sovereign, He had a right to make laws ; laws necessarily imply penalties for their violation ; the penalty is not vindictive but vindicative, i. e., intended to uphold the sovereignty of the law-maker ; that sovereignty is as much denied by one act of disobedience as by another ; hence, every sin is a denial ; every sin, therefore, must deserve punishment, *ergo*, no sin can claim pardon “as of right.” Sins may indeed deserve the punishment of Heaven in a greater or less degree (we read, that the stripes may be many or few), but we have no authority, that I am aware of, for measuring that degree by the terms “*temporal*” and “*eternal*.” I know not where it is written that there is a whole class of sins, venial, or pardonable in their own nature, for which God will punish man, as Rome teaches, with “temporal chastisement”* only. And as the right to make the law, involves necessarily the right to make also what penalty *the law-giver pleases*, we can no otherwise know that the penalty is “temporal chastisement,” than by being expressly told so, *which we nowhere are*.

But in the last place, for I would not weary you with this part of the subject ; it does seem to me that, on the showing of the Romanists themselves, sins though differing in degree, do not and cannot differ *in their essential character* ; and therefore, except for its mischievous and positively bad effect on men’s conduct, the distinction into mortal and venial is unmeaning.

* “Sincere Christian,” p. 258.

It is written "the wages of sin is death:"—it is sin indefinitely, and therefore includes *all* sin: now, under the covenants of Christianity, the shedding of the blood of our blessed Saviour is made indispensable to the remission of sin; and it is owing to the death of our Lord, and the mercy of God the Father, and to nothing else, that sin is made pardonable or venial at all. We are also taught, that through the death of Christ all may be pardoned upon certain conditions, and none are pardoned otherwise. We say the conditions are repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the Romanist says the conditions are penance, auricular confession, and absolution by the priest. Take if you please the conditions of the Romanist: is it not obvious even then, that as death is attached to *all* sin, without distinction, that the man who commits any sin, mortal or venial, dies if he neglect the conditions, and that he who fulfils the conditions will die for none, whether mortal or venial; and consequently that in their essential character and nature *as sin*, mortal and venial must be precisely the same? It is proper, I should add, that one class of Roman writers avoid this inevitable conclusion, by boldly affirming that venial sins are pardonable *in their own nature*, and *do not need the atonement of Christ*. This wicked denial of Christ as the sole Saviour of guilty man needs no answer.

I need hardly pause to speak of the effects of such a view of sin upon men's conduct. It is obvious that nothing can be more injurious to a holy life, than the belief, that there is a class of sins which are sure of pardon. This doctrine cannot possibly help poor weak man "in destroy-

ing the whole body of sin ;” but will inevitably lead him on to the commission of what the Romanist calls mortal or deadly sin ; “despising little things,” he will “perish by little :” for these venial sins are precisely those which are of most frequent occurrence, and to which, frail mortals are most prone. May I not add that being *little*, instead of being venial *per se*, they are precisely those which are least excusable ; for obedience was easier ?

When to this we add that, even by the best of the Roman divines, the list of venial sins is left uncertain and undefined, so that there is perpetual risk of passing, without knowledge, from venial to mortal, I trust you will see that our only security is in adhering to the simple teaching of the word of God, that “*all* unrighteousness is sin,” and that “sin [*all* sin] when it is finished bringeth forth *death*.”

The next position is that confession of sin is a *sacrament*, instituted by divine command.

The Latin word *sacramentum*, from which is derived our word sacrament, is used by the Latin writers to signify an oath or obligation of fidelity, such as was administered to soldiers. By the Latin fathers the word is used in an enlarged range of meaning, to signify *any sacred thing* which lies concealed, or not on the surface.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent thus defines it : “A sacrament is a thing, subject to the senses ; and possessing, by divine institution, as well the power of signifying sanctity and righteousness, as of imparting them.”* Dens

* Sacramentum est res sensibus subjecta, quæ ex Dei institutione,

writes as follows: "It is a sign of a sacred thing, not a naked sign, but one which sanctifies men."*

Protestants, as you are aware, believe that a sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." They also believe that a sacrament consists of two parts, the outward visible sign and the inward spiritual grace. It would hence seem that the Protestant's view of a sacrament embraces three particulars: 1st. Institution by Christ; 2d, Outward significant symbols or visible signs, and 3d, Grace communicated in the faithful and proper use of the sacrament. .

Now the Romanists also admit the first of these. They say that neither had the apostles formerly, nor has the Church now, any power to make sacraments; that Christ alone can institute them. That Christ did institute baptism and the supper of the Lord, is evident enough from Scripture; about these Romanists and Protestants agree; but you will naturally ask where is the evidence *from Scripture* that Christ ever instituted such a sacrament as penance?

It is a singular fact that no Roman writer, as far at least as I have been able to discover, has ever ventured to quote a single passage from Scripture, as *direct* evidence of the institution of penance *as a sacrament*, by our Lord. Its

Sanctitatis et justitiæ tum significandæ, tum efficiendæ vim habet.
Cat. Trent, p. 135.

* Est signum rei sacræ, non nudum, sed ut sanctificans homines.
De Sacramentis in Genere No. 1. Vol. v. Dub. Ed.

claim to this character, as set forth by Romanists themselves, begins, not with Scripture but in *tradition*: nay, some of their own writers expressly deny that all their seven sacraments were instituted by Christ.*

One of their modern divines, Leibermann,† thus attempts to prove that Christ instituted all the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome. He begins with the Council of Trent: “If any one shall say that the sacraments of the new law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ——let him be accursed.” And this dictum of the Council he thus supports: 1. *Scripture*. For this is openly professed by the apostle when writing to the Corinthians. Epist. 1, v. 4.—He says, “Let a man so esteem us as ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God.” Can you find in this one syllable to show that our Lord instituted what Rome calls the sacrament of penance? But to proceed with Leibermann. 2. *Tradition*. For it was the constant persuasion of the Church that all the sacraments were (*tradita*) delivered by tradition from Christ, and that nothing respecting their number or substance could be changed. 3. *Reason*; which, when once it understands the nature and definition of a sacrament, acknowledges that no sacrament is ordained without divine appointment.

You will hence perceive that, after all, *tradition* and not the *written word* constitutes the *divine authority* of the sacraments in the view of the Romanist. And they argue thus

* Hugo. Peter Lombard.

† Institutiones, c. 3. De Auctore Sacram, vol. iv. part 1. p. 225.

in support of it. The New Testament, say they, was not written when Baptism and the Eucharist (confessedly sacraments) were instituted; they had consequently no express Scripture warrant in the beginning; *ergo* they rested on tradition. The answer is very obvious—grant that these two sacraments began in tradition; it is very certain that such tradition was soon written and expressly set down in Scripture and received by the whole Church on the written evidence of such tradition: but the alleged Roman tradition on the subject of penance, was neither thus expressly written down in the Scriptures, nor received by the early Church.

But further, it would seem that even according to the Romish view of a sacrament, it is difficult to make one of penance. They require matter and form as part of the sacrament. What is the matter or sign in penance? Baptism has *water*, the Eucharist *bread and wine*, confirmation *chrism*, extreme unction *oil*, &c.; but what is there in penance? No external visible sign or matter; simply the application of a general promise by the mere use of words. Some of them indeed say that the confession and form of absolution constitute the outward and visible sign; but all do not say this. In fact some place the sign in one thing and some in another.*

Our objection therefore to penance as a sacrament is, that we have no evidence either from Scripture or tradition even, that Christ instituted it as a sacrament; and further that, in the absence of a specific outward and visible sign, it wants one of the indispensable elements of a sacrament.

* See *Gerhard, De Penitent. sec. 23.*

The next assertion of the Church of Rome is that Confession must be *auricular* ; that is, made secretly to a priest, and may and must include a particular enumeration of all sins of all sorts, with an unreserved exposure and submission of the whole heart to the inspection and guidance of the priest, who has power, as God's Vicegerent, to absolve and forgive sins ; and who in absolution acts *judicially* and not *ministerially*, being infallibly directed in his judgment by the Holy Ghost.

The consideration of this I must reserve for my next letter.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

We are now to consider *auricular* confession to a priest. The Romanists rest it, first, on *Scripture*,—"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." James v. 16.

This does not establish the doctrine; because, first, it is not said confess your faults to the *elders* or *presbyters* or *bishops*, but to one another; secondly, if this passage proves that the people must make auricular confession to the priest, then it is equally conclusive to prove that the priest must make a similar confession to the people; thirdly, there is not one word here said of a private whispered confession, nor of absolution by a priest, nor by any other person.

But the passage on which Rome mostly relies, and on which alone the Council of Trent seems to rest the cause of auricular confession, is in John xx. 23:—"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." You will here perceive at once that there is no *direct, explicit* institution of confession to a priest in these words; it is, therefore, to be

deduced as matter of unavoidable inference, if found at all. Accordingly Bellarmine, and some other doctors of the Romish Church, thus deduce it. Christ, say they, here made the Apostles and all priests judges upon earth; so that without their sentence no man who sins after baptism can be reconciled.

But the priests, who are thus made judges, can give no proper sentence, unless they know all the particulars they are to judge.

They cannot know these otherwise than by the penitent's confession to the priest of each particular sin he has committed.

Ergo, by Christ's law the penitent is bound to confess each particular sin to the priest.

I think this a fair statement of the argument of the Church of Rome.

The basis on which all rests is, that Christ has conferred on the priest *judicial* authority. He is made a judge. Suppose for the present we concede it; the question arises, Of what is he to judge? Is it of the penitent sorrow of the confessing, or of the appropriate measure of punishment for certain sins? Is the judgment to be of the man's state of mind, or of the fit punishment for his sins?

It seems, to me at least, very plain that he can be judge only of the penitent's *state of mind*, for these reasons. First, it is not said *whatever* sins ye remit, &c., but *whose soever* sins ye remit, thus clearly referring it to the moral condition of the person. Our Saviour is not here making a distinction between *two sorts of sins*—one to be remitted, and one to be retained; but between *two sorts of sinners*—one

penitent, and the other impenitent. It is true in Matthew xviii. 18 it is said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c., but it is not whatsoever *sins*. Matthew wrote in Hebrew, and here uses a Hebraism; the words *bind* and *loose* are used in the sense of *obliging* and *dissolving*, according to the customary phraseology of the Jews when they referred to any thing as *lawful* or *unlawful* to be done. They occur in no other of the Gospels, probably because they were all written in Greek. The passage gave the Apostles authority to declare what was obligatory and what was dispensed with in the Jewish law; and thus, by the authority of the Holy Spirit, to declare what was to be retained or omitted in the Christian Church.

But as to this passage, it would be doing injustice to the learning of the Church of Rome to suppose her ignorant of the fact, that in the earlier ages of the Christian Church no one ever dreamed of applying it to auricular confession. She must know that by many it was held to have respect to every individual Christian as much as to a priest. In the preceding verses directions are given to every one how to behave toward an offending brother. He must first admonish him *alone*, next before *two or three witnesses*, then *tell it to the Church*; and if he still continue incorrigible, then let him be unto *thee* no better than a *heathen man or a publican*. Immediately after follows this passage, "*Whatsoever ye shall bind*," &c.; by which words a power was understood to be given to a Christian to judge concerning any offence committed against him, with an assurance that his judgment, if just, would be confirmed in heaven. That Augustine so understood it is plain. He has a sermon on

this very passage, in which he thus speaks:—"Thou hast begun to deem thy brother no better than a publican; thou bindest him on earth, but take care that thou bindest him justly; for divine justice breaks in sunder the bonds that are unjust. When thou hast corrected, and agreed with thy brother, thou hast loosed him on earth; when thou hast loosed him on earth, he is loosed in heaven."* The passage is one of caution to the Christian, to be sure he is right before he refuses to have Christian fellowship with his brother. Jerome evidently had in his mind no such interpretation of this passage as the Romanists would give. In his comment on Matthew xvi. 19, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," &c., he thus writes:—"The bishops and priests, misunderstanding this passage, assume to themselves something of the pride of the Pharisees, and think that they have the right to condemn the innocent, and absolve the guilty; whereas with God, not the sentence of the priest, but the life of the guilty is inquired into."†

* "*Cæpisti habere fratrem tuum tanquam publicanum, ligas illum in terra, sed ut juste alliges, vide. Nam injusta vincula dirumpit justitia. Cum autem correxeris et concordaveris cum fratri tuo, soluisti illum in terra. Cum solueris in terra, solutus erit et in cælo.*" Opera August., vol. 10, p. 87. Editio Lugduni, 1561.

† "*Istum locum episcopi et presbyteri non intelligentes, aliquid sibi de Pharisæorum assumunt supercilio, ut vel damnent innocentes, vel solvere se noxios arbitrentur, cum apud Deum, non sententia sacerdotum, sed reorum vita quærat.*" Hieron, in loco. I cite this passage, without meaning to assert that it is Jerome's; some of the learned have doubted whether he wrote the commentary on Matthew attributed to him. Romanists however generally receive it as his.

Secondly. Without infinite holiness, no mere man can see sin as God sees it ; without omniscience to perceive all the workings of conscience against the commission of any given sin, all the amount of knowledge which the sinner may possess or want, all the force of temptation, weak or strong, long resisted or not at all opposed ; in short, without the power of infallibly reading the secrets of the heart, no mere mortal can possibly determine what is the suitable penance for any sin. If the priest be God's vicegerent in the matter, acting under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then it must follow that his punishments will be precisely such in any given case of sin as God himself would inflict. But what ground is there, either in Scripture or reason, for any such pretence of holiness in a Roman priest, or of infallibility founded on omniscience ; or of any given punishment being precisely what God would inflict ? None. If, then, (admitting the priest to be, as he claims, a judge,) he is to judge of the man's penitence merely, of his moral state, what earthly necessity is there for a distinct confession of all his sins *seriatim* ? If in heart-broken contrition he make a general acknowledgment, or confession of sin, and profess a hearty sorrow for it, why is it not as satisfactory evidence of his moral condition as a specific enumeration of his sins would be ? In either case, what other evidence can the priest have but the mere word of the penitent ? The only difference is, that in the one case the priest possesses himself of all the secret acts of the penitent's life, and thus brings him under his power ; and in the other, he does not.

But is he in fact a *judge* at all ?

It is a strange judicatory that is so constituted as to confer judicial functions, and not *secure* to the judge, beyond all peradventure, the right to *compel* submission to his jurisdiction. Grant, if you please, that the Romanist may deduce from John xx. 23 a power in the priest to judge, when a penitent comes before him ; he certainly cannot deduce from it that a penitent is *bound* to come to this judicatory, and may not apply for pardon at once to the divine tribunal. He is not authorized, even by Rome, to issue any process which will compel his attendance. Nay, so far from binding him to come, the Romanists themselves say that he cannot, by reason of any words of Christ, be *compelled* to confess his *venial* sins. Then it must follow, we think, that he is not bound to confess his mortal sins ; and consequently the priest's claim to be a *judge* falls to the ground, for he is without a certain jurisdiction. For if a man be bound to *repent* of *all* his sins, one of two consequences inevitably results : either repentance may be performed without the intervention of the priest at all ; or else, if the priest be necessary, a sinner must repent *before the priest for all* : but, says the Romanist, he may repent of his venial sins, *and not go to the priest* ; then going to the priest is not *per se* an *essential, indispensable part of repentance*. If, therefore, it is claimed that any act of repentance does not fall within this last proposition, but forms an exception to it ; it is very clear that, as God "hath commanded all men every where to repent," the express declaration of Christ making the alleged exception, must be shown, or all repentance will fall under the general rule which makes priestly intervention not an essential of repentance. We

ask therefore for express declaration requiring, for the repentance of "mortal" sin, the intervention of a priest, as an indispensable or essential ingredient. I need not add, we ask in vain.

But further, when jurisdiction is given among men, it is always by *express grant*: it must be so: no man has or can have a natural right to be a judge, even in things temporal; and his power to exercise judicial functions is consequently never matter of inference. He is regularly appointed a judge, with all the rights and powers belonging to his office clearly defined. Jurisdiction is conferred positively and expressly. Is it not then reasonable to require of the Romanist something stronger than an exceedingly forced *inference*, to sustain his claim to a priestly judicatory? The subjects of judgment are confessedly beyond mortal ken, they are the hidden workings of the human heart: they are the dispensation of punishments, to be meted out with a passionless equity, so pure, so righteous, that an infinitely wise and holy being would have meted out exactly the same: they are claimed to be the acts of God's earthly vicegerent, preserved by the Divine Spirit of truth and righteousness from all possibility of error, for they are to be finally ratified by the great God of heaven and earth, in whom there is no possibility of wrong or mistake!

These are large claims to be made by man. If God has bestowed such awful gifts, we are ready to bow in submission to His appointments, whatever they may be: but before we, as reasonable and accountable beings, can acknowledge the grant from Heaven of such powers to men of like passions and infirmities with ourselves, we ask for

something more than an over-strained and illogical inference to sustain them. We ask for that at least, which the wisdom of even weak man has seen to be necessary in securing respect and obedience for judicatories that are of the earth all earthy. We ask for a grant of powers so unequivocal, so express, that a doubt is dishonoring to human reason : we ask that these powers may be so clearly defined, as to save us from the tyranny of judicial caprice : we ask for some security against moral impurity and intellectual unfitness in him who exercises one of Heaven's most awful prerogatives, and sits in the seat of God, as the judge of men's sins and men's souls.

When God shall say to us *expressly*, 'the priests of my Church are the judges of your souls ; and to them I command you to unbosom every secret thought and work of your innermost hearts, and to lay bare before them, every sin, even as they stand naked before my eye ;' then will we believe ; and find in the command alone, all the evidence we wish of priestly power, priestly purity, and priestly wisdom, for the discharge of the duties of God's vicegerents ; and we will obey. But until then ; to him who, as a priest of the Church of Rome, claims these high powers, on no better authority than that of the Council of Trent, and the perversion of the written word of God ; standing "fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," we will say to the impious usurper of the judgment seat of Heaven ; — "Who art THOU that judgest another man's servant ? To his own master he standeth or falleth."

But there is yet more to be said on the claim made to

judicial powers by the priesthood of the Church of Rome : and as it is really the basis of the argument they deduce from John xx. 23, you must permit me to detain you on this point a little longer.

It is one part of the province of a judge to *punish* : from him proceeds authoritatively the sentence which vindicates the violated majesty of the law. Now we ask, if the priest be a judge, why has he not express authority to *punish* ? We can find for him in Scripture authority to *declare*, in God's name, God's pardon to the penitent, God's anger against sin, and *His* threatened punishment of it : but not one syllable can be found in the book of God, whereby he delegates to man, be he priest or be he layman, His own high prerogative of inflicting punishment on the spiritual part of man's nature for transgression. "The soul that sinneth it shall *die*." Where is it written that *man* has any power to visit the soul with death ? So much as to the impenitent. As to the penitent, I cannot do better than present you with the conclusive argument of Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

"Neither gave He any power to *punish*, but to pardon or not to pardon. If Christ had intended to give the priests a power to impose a punishment according to the quality of every sin ; the priest indeed had been the executioner of Divine wrath : but then, because no punishment in this life can be equal to the demerit of a sin which deserves the eternal wrath of God ; it is certain the priest is not to punish them by way of vengeance. We do not find any thing in the words of Christ, obliging the priest directly to impose penances on the penitent sinner ; he may *voluntarily* submit

himself to them, if he please ; and he *may* do very well, if he do so : but the power of retaining sins gives no power to punish him whether he will or no ; for the power of retaining is rather to be exercised upon the impenitent than upon the penitent. Besides this, the word of [remitting] sins does not certainly give the priest a power to impose penances ; for it were a prodigy of interpretation to expound *remittere* by *punire*. But if by [retaining] it be said, this power is given him ; then must this needs belong to the impenitent, who are not remitted ; and not to the penitent, whose sins at that time they remit, and retain not, unless they can do both at the same time. But if the punishment designed, be only by way of remedy, or of disposing the sinners to true penitence ; then if the person be already truly penitent, the priest has nothing to do, but to pardon him in the name of God. Now, certainly, both these things may be done without the special enumeration of all his sins.”

The conclusion which we reach therefore is, that the claim of the Romish priest to act *judicially* in what he calls the sacrament of penance is utterly unfounded. And if in this we be correct, then the superstructure which with so much ingenuity Bellarmine and others have reared on this foundation falls to the ground. For, if the priest be *not a judge*, authorized by his sentence to reconcile men to God by remission of sins committed after baptism ; then the priests have no need of knowing the sins one by one ; and if they need not know them, then the sinner need not confess them to the priest : *ergo*, Christ has neither directly nor indirectly

imposed on the sinner the obligation of seeking the remission of his sins through the medium of confession to a priest.

But would you not, my dear friend, from the extraordinary tone of confident assertion on the part of the Church of Rome, naturally conclude that not a dissentient voice was to be found within her borders, on the interpretation given by the Council of Trent of the passage from John, which we have been considering:—would you not suppose that all admitted confession to be an institution of Christ? How then will you be surprised when I tell you that some men, as wise and good as Rome ever had in her communion, have flatly contradicted her interpretation of the passage. Hear Bishop Taylor again:

“ Besides that all the Canonists allow not that confession was instituted by Christ; Aquinas, Scotus, Gabriel Clavasinus, the author of the *Summa Evangelica*, Hugo de St. Victore, Bonaventure, Alensis, Tho. Waldensis, Ferus, Cajetan, Erasmus, B. Rhenanus and Jansenius, though differing much in the particulars of this question, yet all consent that *precisely from these words of Christ, no necessity of confession to a priest can be concluded.*”

“ Who shall decide when Doctors disagree?”

You and I have been taught to resort to the word of God, as received and understood in the first ages of the Christian Church. By that then let us abide, and before I have done we will endeavour to discover from the testimony of pious and good men what the primitive church both believed and practised; we will see whether they knew any thing of the present Romish doctrine of auricular confession: but

for the present, it is sufficient for us to say that it will be time enough for Rome to demand our assent to her dogmas when all her own writers and scholars have assented to them, and when they can be sustained by the testimony of God's word, and the voice of genuine, uncorrupted Christian antiquity; until that time, however, we trust it will be deemed "no sin against the law of love," to smile at her arrogance, the impudence of which may be forgiven in the conviction of its impotence.

But further, not only must the penitent confess all sins privately, but, says the Church of Rome, the priest, as God's vicegerent, has power to *absolve and forgive* those sins, upon certain conditions imposed on the penitent; and this involves the Romish doctrine of *satisfaction* as one of the ingredients of their pretended sacrament of penance. This idea of satisfaction made by man for his sins is founded on the distinction they make between punishment temporal and punishment eternal; and further by the dogma that temporal punishment for sin is remitted by the penitent's *satisfying* the justice of God, either by doing voluntary, or enjoined acts of penance, by obtaining indulgences, or by suffering the penalty in purgatory. And here, by the way, you have the true origin of their doctrine of purgatory. It is not founded, as some have supposed, on the "place of departed spirits;" in which, as I apprehend, our branch of the Church believes, with full warranty both of Scripture and legitimate antiquity: but it is part of a corrupt system, which finds its interest in saying: 1st, if you will not submit to the temporal punishment imposed by the priest here, you

will have to bear it hereafter, for there is a place, purgatory, made for that very purpose: and 2d, in persuading the ignorant that if they have any friends in purgatory, they may release them by paying money to the priests for masses for their souls; and so purgatory becomes, just as indulgences are, part of the capital stock of the Romish exchequer.

But it is best to let the Romanist speak for himself on the subject of satisfaction. The Council of Trent, in her 14th session, chapter 8th, declares that "the notion that an offence is never forgiven by the Lord, without a remission of the whole punishment, is altogether false and contrary to the word of God." "We are able to make satisfaction to God the Father, through Christ Jesus, not only by punishments voluntarily endured by us as chastisements for sin, or imposed at the pleasure of the priest according to the degree of the offence, but also by temporal pains, inflicted by God himself and by us patiently borne." Now here we cannot but pause a moment, to ask, in the case of a penitent on whom the priest has imposed a penance, during which some grievous calamity from God falls on the penitent, and is meekly borne, we ask, How is the priest to know, on his own doctrine, but that such visitation from heaven is actually the temporal punishment sent by God to work out, by patient endurance, satisfaction for the very sin on which he, the priest, has imposed penance? And if it be, (and surely neither the priest nor any one else can say with certainty that he knows it is *not*,) what becomes of the priest's claim to act as God's vicegerent, and under the infallible guidance of the Eternal Spirit to impose such penal satisfaction for

sin as God will surely ratify ; when here, (on the Romish doctrine that afflictions on earth are satisfaction,) God may actually be demanding *more* than the priest required ? What becomes of the priest's pretended powers as a *judge* appointed and specially instructed by God to determine officially the demerit of sins ? The emptiness of his claim, on this view of the subject, can no otherwise be evaded than by a *petitio principii* : he may beg the question, and say that he knows the afflictions sent from God are *not* for the sins that he sentenced to be satisfied by penance, because God gave him the power as a judge infallibly to pronounce such a sentence as He himself would have pronounced ; and *therefore* the afflictions *must* be in satisfaction for some other sins : but the whole *jugulum causæ* is, Did God give him this judicial power which he claims ? But to return to the Council of Trent on this point of satisfaction :

Canon 12. If any one shall affirm that the entire punishment is always remitted by God, together with the guilt ; and that penitents need no other satisfaction than faith, by which they apprehend, or lay hold of, Christ, as having made satisfaction for them : *let him be accursed !*

Canon 13. If any one shall affirm that we can by no means make satisfaction to God for our sins, through the merits of Christ, as far as the temporal penalty is concerned, either by punishments inflicted on us by him, and patiently borne, or enjoined by the priest, but not undertaken of our own accord, such as fastings, prayers, alms, or other works of piety, and therefore that the best penance is a new life only : *let him be accursed !*

Canon 15. If any one shall affirm that the keys are given to the Church to loose only, and not also to bind ; and that, therefore, when priests impose punishments on those who confess, they act in opposition to the design of the keys, and against the institution of Christ ; and that it is a fiction that, by virtue of the keys, when the eternal punishment is taken away, the temporal punishment remains to be endured : *let him be accursed !*

Hear also the Roman Catechism :

“ Satisfaction is the full payment of a debt.” p. 265. It is “ the compensation made by man to God, by doing something *in atonement* for the sins which he has committed.” *Ibid.*

Of the performance of a prescribed penance, this is its language :—“ It makes satisfaction to God for the sins which he [the penitent] has committed, and this is an act of justice toward God.” p. 238.

“ Afflictions coming from the hand of God, if borne with patience, are an abundant source of satisfaction, and of merit.” p. 272.

One further remark completes the view of this doctrine of satisfaction. Rome teaches that the Church has a stock of merits, composed

1st. Of the excess of the merits of our Saviour above what was necessary to satisfy for the eternal punishment of men’s sins ; and

2d. Of the merits of all the saints that were more than necessary to satisfy for themselves.

This is very valuable stock. The dividends on it are

twofold ; 1st, indulgences, and 2d, masses to take the suffering dead out of purgatory ; but as the whole stock belongs to the Church, i. e. to the Pope, bishops, and clergy, the dividends are all theirs likewise : and these, there being no competition in the market, they dispose of at their own prices, leaving the capital stock untouched ; for, as Christ's merits are infinite, the excess from that source of course cannot be exhausted : and as to saintly superabundance, saints of excessive holiness are always dying, and the Church, as a standing residuary legatee, takes all the holiness they leave, over and above what was indispensable for their admission into glory.

Excuse me, my dear friend, if I seem to indulge for a moment in levity. It is true the subject is one of vast importance, and there is an awful wickedness in man's thus deliberately turning the merits of the adorable Redeemer of sinners into an article of merchandise ; but it must also be confessed, there is something which is calculated to provoke a smile, in the contemplation of the cool and unblushing impudence with which men pretend, in one breath, to sell us for money an indulgence to sin, and in the next, when we have dared to sin without previously paying for such indulgence, to sell us, again for money, peace with God, His pardon, and a restoration to His favor.

Now we object to their whole doctrine on this subject that it has no foundation either in reason or Scripture.

Sin is the act, *guilt* is the moral consequence, the defilement of soul resulting from that act, and imposes the *obligation* to endure a commensurate penalty. When God for Christ's sake forgives to the truly penitent the *guilt*, (the *sin* is *res*

acta, and cannot be undone,) he does two things: he cleanses away the moral pollution, sanctifies the soul of the penitent, making him to loathe such defilement; and he also exempts him from the eternal punishment which that guilt deserves: and thus Scripture teaches; “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to *forgive* us our sins, and to *cleanse* us from *all unrighteousness* :” and this exemption is the only possible evidence that the guilt has been forgiven.

Ex vi termini, forgiveness involves exemption from punishment; for if punishment be inflicted, all is inflicted that would have followed non-forgiveness. You cannot, therefore, otherwise know the fact of forgiveness but by exemption from punishment. The Romanist has confounded punishment with discipline. The first is an act indicating displeasure toward an offender, or toward his conduct; the last is an act often affording proof of the highest love. Good men may repent, God may forgive them, and yet they may afterward suffer many afflictions and calamities, not as *punishments*, however, for sins already forgiven, but as merciful corrections, as necessary checks to prevent them from falling again into sins, as needful trials for testing what manner of spirit they are of. Calamities call out Christian graces in the child of God; but let a Christian poet speak:—

“Methinks, if ye would know

How visitations of calamity

Affect the pious soul, 'tis shown ye there!

Look yonder at that cloud, which, through the sky

Sailing alone, doth cross, in her career,

The rolling moon! I watch'd it as it came

And deem'd the deep opaque would blot her beams ;
 But melting like a wreath of snow, it hangs
 In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
 The orb with richer beauties than her own,
 Then, passing, leaves her in her light serene.*

The calamities of earth are disciplinary visitations, not punishments ; and this distinction furnishes a key to the correct interpretation of all those passages of Scripture which Rome cites for her doctrine of satisfaction made for sin by earthly sorrows.

But what says the Bible on this subject ? Where does it teach us the popish distinction between the temporal and eternal punishment of sin ? Nowhere.

Christ taught us when we pray to say, "Forgive us our debts, (i. e. sins,) as we forgive our debtors." Now when we forgive, we require no payment in whole, or in part.

Rome teaches us that when God forgives, He still requires of us the further penance imposed by the priest.

Christ therefore, if Rome teach truly, taught us to ask of God what we know He never will grant.

Forgiveness is represented in Scripture as being entirely an act of GRACE—free and gratuitous.

"Being justified freely by his *grace*, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And this grace is represented as being incompatible with *works* of penance, or any other works, as a procuring cause of forgiveness :—"If it be by works, it is no more of grace."

"I will forgive their sins, and remember their iniquities

* Southey's Roderick.

no more:" does this teach that God exacts punishment after forgiveness? "All his transgressions which he [the penitent sinner] hath committed, shall not be mentioned to him:" if God will not even mention, or remember them, *a fortiori*, he will not punish them afterward.

But further: mark the dishonour that this doctrine of satisfaction does to the blessed Saviour. His merits were infinite, and consequently competent to make "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and *satisfaction* for the sins of the whole world." Is Rome wicked and unphilosophical enough to attempt an addition to CHRIST'S *infinity*? She may as easily enlarge eternity.

The *examples* furnished in Scripture afford no countenance to this doctrine of satisfaction. The publican, on his repentance, was pardoned, and no satisfaction was required. St. Peter, an immediate follower of Christ, fell; he was pardoned without satisfaction. The man sick of the palsy was forgiven; there is no record of any satisfaction. The woman taken in adultery was told, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." No injunction do we read about satisfaction. The weeping Magdalene heard, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much:" but not a word about making satisfaction.

We have many *precepts* in the New Testament concerning preaching, praying, baptizing, communicating—and very plain precepts they are; is it not marvellous, then, that if confession, and absolution, and penance, constituted a sacrament, by Christ's own appointment, we should not find some directions concerning it as we do touching other acknow-

ledged sacraments and usages of the Church? We have three epistles written to bishops, whose especial duty it was to see that the Church proceeded according to Christ's appointments. These contain directions about preaching, baptizing, ordaining, the holy communion, &c., but not one word about confession and satisfaction. Why did not St. Paul instruct Timothy and Titus to appoint a "penitentiary," as Rome calls him, to hear auricular confessions? His subject called for it, inasmuch as he does teach them how to conduct the public discipline of offenders; he tells them to administer rebuke to them openly before all men. Why did he not furnish them with an ecclesiastical tariff, with what Bishop Taylor calls "penitential tables" and "penitential canons," and a "chancery tax?"

Why, when writing to private Christians, does he command every one who is about to receive the holy communion, "to examine himself and so let him eat?" Why does he not order them, as Rome now does, to go to auricular confession to be examined by a priest before coming to the communion? Certainly if it were an indispensable Christian duty, this was the time to enforce it.

There is but one passage in all St. Paul's epistles that is applicable to auricular confession. It is that in which he speaks of "some that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women." "I should have thought, (says Bishop Jeremy Taylor,) he had intended it against such as then abused auricular confession; it being so like what they do now; but that St. Paul knew nothing of these lately introduced practices."

And this quotation from the good bishop suggests to me

the propriety of saying a word about the injurious effects of auricular confession, viewed in reference to morals. If Christ appointed it, the abuse of his appointment would certainly form no sufficient argument against its lawful use; but, inasmuch as we think its appointment by our Saviour is at least questionable; and more especially, as what Rome teaches to be the *legitimate* use of it tends to the grossest immorality, we cannot help thinking that such immorality does furnish a reason for believing that it never could have come from Christ.

The proper treatment of this part of the subject is not without difficulty. I am not willing to pollute my letter with the beastly indecency set forth by the Church of Rome in the interrogatories of the confessional; nor yet can I do justice to the subject without verifying my remarks by reference to Rome's own writings. I must compromise the matter by enclosing a paper copied from the original in Latin, and containing enough to show you that I do not traduce the Church of Rome.* The questions propounded to females, whether married or single, are such as no virtuous woman can hear without a blush of mingled shame and indignation; while to an immodest woman, they are but suggestive of impurity, and provocatives to sin. It has long been my deliberate conviction that the husband or father who permits his wife or daughter to go to auricular confession, has no one but himself to blame, should he afterward find the name of his family overwhelmed with shame and disgrace, by a lapse from female virtue.

* See Appendix, *Publisher*.

Hear again our good bishop Taylor.

“Let it be considered that there being some things, which St. Paul says are not to be *so much as named among Christians*; it must needs look indecently that all men and all women should come and make the priest’s ears a common sewer, to empty all their filthiness; and that which a modest man would blush to hear, he must be used to, and it is the greatest part of his employment to attend to:—— and it not only pollutes the priest’s ears but his tongue too; for lest any circumstance, or any sin be concealed, he thinks himself obliged to interrogate and proceed to particular questions in the basest things. Such as that which is to be seen in Burchard, and such which are too largely described in Sanchez; which thing does not only deturpate all honest and modest conversation, but it teaches men to understand more sins than ever they (it may be) knew of. I need not tell how the continual representment of such things to the priest must needs infect the fancy and the memory with filthy imaginations, and be a state of temptation to them that are very often young men, and always unmarried and tempted.”

Take the list of subjects on which all both male and female are instructed to catechise themselves previous to confession, with reference to the seventh commandment: “Committed adultery, fornication or incest. Procured pollution of one’s self or others. Wanton words, looks or gestures. Lascivious dressing, colors or painting. Lewd company. Lascivious balls or revellings. Dishonest looks. Unchaste songs. Kissing or unchaste discourses. Took carnal plea-

sure, by touching myself or others of either sex. Showed some naked part of your body to entice others." (See 'Path to Paradise,' p. 46.)

Now just imagine a young female subjected to a searching examination by a priest, on these and kindred topics, conducted in secret, and prosecuted by interrogatories too indecent for repetition; and when all this obscenity is finished, imagine this poor girl, after repeating the *confiteor*, to rise from her knees, and "touch with her lips either the ear or cheek of the spiritual father" (for this is the prescribed form); and all this to be done *in secret*, with a bond laid on her conscience never to relate, even to a mother, what either he or she said, and still less what he did, or attempted to do; and I think you will be able to determine for yourself what is likely to be the practical working of the system of Romish auricular confession.

Do not suppose I am calumniating. The testimony of *facts* is too damning to admit of doubt. History has left its record behind for our warning. Has Rome forgotten the history of what were called *solicitants* during the pontificate of Pope Paul IV.? Does she dare to deny that so general had become the practice among the confessors of soliciting their female penitents to commit with them indecent acts that the Pope was obliged, in order to preserve the institution of auricular confession (too valuable a discoverer of secrets to be sacrificed), to issue in 1561 a bull against solicitants? Did this remedy the evil? Was not Pius IV. obliged, in 1564, to issue a new bull, "*contra solicitantes in confessione*?" Was not an edict published in Seville, in 1563, instructing

all who had been solicited to report within thirty days to the inquisition ; and were not the denunciations so numerous that the Recorders of the Holy Office could not register them all within the time, so that more than once it was extended by successive additional periods of thirty days ; and so that it took in all no less than one hundred and twenty days simply to register the complaints ?

Yes, verily, history tells us all this, and much more ; and it tells us, too, that the Holy Inquisitors, alarmed at the immense number of denunciations, perceived that their craft was in danger, and contrived to get rid of the whole matter by abandoning their registrations, and renouncing the prosecution of the delinquents.

But further : this system of auricular confession is unsafe in any *government*. I am not prepared to say that in our country there is, just now, any great danger to be apprehended from it ; for the genius of our institutions is one not friendly to Romish principles, should they at present attempt to do here what they have heretofore done elsewhere ; but I do say, that the principles avowed, if carried out, are incompatible with the safety of any government. You will bear in mind that *secrecy* on the part of the priest who hears confession is enjoined by Rome under the heaviest penalties here and hereafter. Now listen to the teachings of Rome, extracted from the class-book which she deliberately adopted for the instruction of her young clergy at Maynooth :

“ *Can a case be given in which it is lawful to break the secrecy of confession ?*

“ *Ans.* None can be given, although the life or safety of

a man may depend on it ; or even the *destruction of the commonwealth* [interitus reipublicæ]. Nor can the Pope himself dispense with it ; because the secrecy of the seal of confession is more binding than the obligations of an oath, a vow, a natural secret, &c. : and this by the positive will of God.

“ What then should a confessor answer when interrogated concerning any truth which he knows by sacramental confession only ?

“ Ans. He ought to answer that *he does not know it ;* and if necessary, ought to *confirm that by an oath.*

“ Objection. It is in no case lawful to lie, but the confessor lies because he knows the truth ; therefore, &c.

“ Ans. The minor proposition I deny, because such a confessor is interrogated *as a man*, and answers *as a man* ; but, as a man, he does not know this truth, although he may KNOW IT AS GOD, as St. Thomas [Aquinas] says, Qu. 11, Art. 1 and 3 : and this sense properly exists in the answer ; for when he is interrogated, or responds, in other cases than confession, he is considered *as a man*.

“ But what if it should be directly inquired of the confessor whether he knows that thing by sacramental confession ?

*“ In this case he ought to answer nothing ; so says Steyart, with Sylvius ; but such a question is to be rejected as impious : or the confessor may say absolutely to the question, not relatively, ‘ I know nothing ; ’ because the word I (ego) refers to human knowledge.”**

Now what have we here ?

* Theologia Petri Dens. De fractione sigilli sacramentalis, No. 160, vol. vi., p. 219. (Dublin Edition.)

1st. That what a priest learns in confession, he knows not as man, but as God.

2dly. That he may innocently tell a deliberate lie.

3dly. That he may as innocently commit a perjury, by swearing to it.

4thly. That he is bound to hold his peace, when speaking would prevent the death of a fellow-being, or his damnation ; or the destruction of the republic.

From this last it follows that if a priest knew by means of confession that there was a plan to take the life of the President, or a conspiracy to dissolve the union of these States ; or a traitorous purpose, in time of war, to desert with a division of the army, and go over to the enemy, on the eve of a battle, he owes no duty to his country strong enough to justify him in communicating these things. And for what is all this ? To sustain the authority of the Romish priesthood in a country whose protection is repaid by silently permitting the sacrifice of her dearest interests.

I have been obliged to make my letter of unusual length, and therefore will here conclude.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

The next assertion of Rome is, that such confession as she teaches, was always the doctrine of the Church of Christ. The examination of this will be most easily made by a brief history of confession.

All the sins that can be confessed must fall under one or the other of the three following heads :

1. Those whereby God and God only is offended.
2. Those whereby some particular fellow-creature is offended as well as God.
3. Those whereby no particular person is offended, but scandal is given to the public society of Christians to which we belong, as well as to God.

As to the first ; it is agreeable to God's word, that men should confess such sins to God ; and if they *voluntarily choose* to confess them even privately to a fellow Christian or to a Christian minister, with the view of obtaining direction to overcome some particular sin ; or, under a conscience troubled for sin in general, to learn something of the terms of the gospel, I know not where *such* confession is declared unlawful.

As to the second class, sins whereby we have injured particular persons, it is an unquestionable Christian duty to confess them both to God and to the person injured, and further, it is a duty, as far as possible, to make restitution to the latter.

As to the third class, when public scandal is given to the Church, the body of Christ, though no particular person be offended, it is a duty to confess such sins to God, and to men, as *publicly* as we have publicly sinned against the whole body of Christian brethren. The obligation to such confession arises from the duty of doing away, as far as is possible by the offender, the evils occasioned by his pernicious example.

You have here then, what I understand to be the doctrine of Protestants on the subject of confession: for you must not suppose we reject confession of sins, as a part of Christian duty. What we oppose, is the doctrine of auricular confession to a priest as taught by the Church of Rome. By confession, that Church does not mean confession to God, nor confession to an injured person, nor public confession to the Church, but whispered confession to a priest, and nothing else.

The first confessions of which we read in ecclesiastical history, carry us back to the primitive Church, and were such public confessions as are spoken of in the third class above named. The discipline of the early Church was remarkably rigorous; and if now alas! it be as remarkably relaxed, we may impute it in a great degree to the use of private confession, voluntary at first, but gradually en-

croaching more and more on the ancient discipline, until it reached the enormity of auricular confession as an institution of Christ.

If, in early times, a Christian man became immoral, he was admonished ; if he reformed not, he was cast out of the communion of the faithful, and he could never be readmitted to the Christian church, but by a confession and repentance as public as his sin had been. Hear the account given by Tertullian of what was called the *exomologesis*. This Greek word means no more, as applied to sin, than a full and thorough public acknowledgment or confession of it : the Roman writers, however, have labored hard to pervert its meaning, and hence, whenever they meet with it in any of the ancient authors, interpret it to mean private auricular confession. But I quote Tertullian now, not so much to show you, as however the passage does, that his definition of the *exomologesis* says not one word about auricular confession ; but to let you see what was the severity of the ancient discipline.

“ The *Exomologesis* is the discipline of a man’s prostrating and humbling himself, enjoining him a conversation that may move God to mercy. It obliges a man to change his habit and his food, to lie in sackcloth and in ashes, to dishonor his body by a neglect of dress and ornament, to afflict his soul with sorrow, and to change his former sinful conversation by a quite contrary practice ; to use meat and drink, not to please his appetite, but only for the sake of his soul ; to quicken his prayers and devotions by frequent fastings ; to groan and weep, and cry unto the Lord God both day and night ; to turn to the presbyters of the Church, to

kneel before the beloved ones of God, and beg of all the brethren, that they would become intercessors for his pardon: all this the *Exomologesis* requires to recommend a true repentance.”*

This was the ancient public discipline, it was in general use, and the Christians of early times were disposed to submit to it. You will therefore infer from this fact, what history confirms, that there could be but little occasion for private confession, since the end in view was so much better answered by that which was public.

Thus public confession in the Church continued for a long time; but there was also a voluntary private confession of one layman to another, founded on the passage in James, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.” Sometimes, also, a layman voluntarily confessed his faults to a priest, not as to one having power to pardon, but simply as to an ecclesiastic, a good man in whom he had confidence: this is obvious from the fact, that such confessions were as often made to a deacon as to a priest.

Presently these private confessions began gradually to supersede the public ones, and public discipline became relaxed; the next step was to prohibit deacons from hearing confessions.

The priests next began to claim powers of remitting and retaining, then by degrees came the distinction between mortal and venial sins, then the Council of Lateran, in 1215, enjoined private confession to a priest at least once a year, and

the performance of the penance he imposed under pain of excommunication ; and this, as Fleury says, is the *first canon* that imposed sacramental penance. Then came finally the Council of Trent, between 1545 and 1563, and sentenced to damnation all who will not receive auricular confession as Rome now holds it.

This is, in brief, a history of the rise of this Romish institution. Now let us see how far the genuine writings of Christian authors support Rome. And here a word touching the "fathers," as they are termed, may not be inappropriate. He is an unwise man who, from prejudice, deems lightly of the fathers. Without their aid, he could not even establish the canon of Scripture. It is true that, in more ways than one, Rome has abused them. She sometimes corrupts and alters them, and always quotes them as conclusive *authority* for *doctrine* as well as for facts. This authority, it is true, is considered but as a branch of *tradition* ; tradition, however, being made by Rome as infallible as Scripture, the concurrence of the fathers is considered in the same light as Scripture.

The enlightened Protestant Episcopalian considers the fathers as most valuable, and indeed, often the only witnesses to very important *facts* ; but he acknowledges no *authority* in their doctrinal statements, compelling him to believe as they did. He is not afraid to bring his Christian views, either as to creed or practice, into juxtaposition with the *facts* contained in the *genuine* writings of the early Christian authors. I say genuine, because nothing is better known to the diligent ecclesiastical student than that Rome has grossly

corrupted, and altered, and added to the writings of holy men of old, to favor her own peculiar views. On this subject I cannot of course fully enter here: volumes have been composed in a mere enumeration of the corrupt alterations made by Rome in the fathers. One or two specimens must here suffice.

An edition of Chrysostom's works was printed at Basil. In his first homily on John, the following words are stricken out: "The Church is not built on the man, but on faith." In his sermon on Pentecost, these words are erased: "There is no merit but what is given us by Christ."

Cyril of Alexandria has been mutilated by the erasure of the following words: "As it is written, Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith."

Epiphanius in his comments on the epistle to the Romans, wrote: "The holy Church of God adores not the creature." The last four words are stricken out.

In the preface of an edition of Augustine, published at Venice, are these words: "We have taken care that all those things which could affect the minds of the faithful with heretical pravity, or would cause them to deviate from the Catholic orthodox faith, be taken away."

On this subject of auricular confession particularly, have they taken very great liberties with the fathers. In an investigation, once made into their corruptions to sustain this dogma, I found (as my notes made at the time show me) liberties taken with Clement, Ambrose, Cyprian, Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, and Athanasius.

It is therefore a wise rule in reading Romish writers to

verify *all* their quotations from the *fathers*. The changes are often very dexterously made by the mere omission of a letter. An instance now occurs in a passage from Tertulian, already quoted in this letter; where the Latin word *caris* (the dear, or beloved ones, or friends of God) is ingeniously altered in the sense, by simply dropping the initial letter; thus making it read, *aris* (the altars of God).

With these remarks I proceed to the fathers, simply requesting you to observe that a great many passages which the Romanists unhesitatingly apply to auricular confession, are equally applicable to the *general public confession*, or that species of private confession, of which I have already spoken, and were in fact so applied by their writers.

IRENEUS.

The Romanists cite him, not forgetting to tell us that he was the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John. They quote his passages concerning certain women who had been seduced and misled by Marcus the heretic :

“ These, often converted to the Church of God, confessed that having their bodies exterminated as it were, by him, and influenced by lust, they loved him to excess.”

Of another who had been seduced :

“ When with great labor the brethren had converted her, penetrated with grief, she spent her whole time in confessing and bewailing her sins (in exomologesi) and lamenting the crime she had been led by this magician to commit.”

One other passage :

“Cerdon, after coming into the church and making his confession, thus spent his time ; at one time privately teaching, at another, making his confession.”

These are Rome’s testimonies from Ireneus for *auricular* confession ! Do you not perceive that every one of the three is applicable to the *general* confession imposed by the ancient discipline ; that the second is expressly stated to be *in exomologesi*, which Tertullian has already shown us was an open *public* act ; and that in the third, Cerdon is expressly said to have *come into the church* to make his confession ?

Now let us see whether Ireneus really held to auricular confession and priestly remission. Hear what he says :

“CHRIST *absolving men from their sins, cured them indeed. He thus manifested who he was ; for if no one can remit sins but God alone,*” &c.*

His inference is that Christ was divine.

TERTULLIAN.

Rome cites the following : it is from his book, de Penitentia.

“*I presume that many avoid declaring their sins, or delay it from day to day, because they have more regard for their honor, than they have for their salvation ; they resemble in this respect those who having contracted a disease in the hidden*

* Christus peccata remittens hominum, quidem curavit ; semetipsum autem, manifeste ostendit quis esset. Si autem nemo potest remittere peccata, nisi solus Deus,” &c. Iren. lib. 11, ch. 17.

parts of their body, conceal it from the eye of their physician, and suffer themselves thus to be bereft of life through an unhappy shame."

"And again :—" *O the singular advantage to be gained by concealing our sin ! Do we think that by covering it from the eyes of men, it will escape the all-seeing eye of God ?*"

This is the writer who has so fully explained to us the *exomologesis* ; and is there one syllable in these extracts to sustain auricular confession, as Rome holds it ? Is not every word equally applicable to what undoubtedly existed in Tertullian's time, viz. open public confession, and voluntary private confession by Christians to one another ?

But let us see what we can find in Tertullian that will show us his opinion *definitely* (not by inference) of priestly remission.

*"Who remits sins but God alone ?"**

But the Romanist will tell us that Tertullian wrote this after he became a Montanist. It is granted. What then ? Dupin (the Romanist) tells us, "as to what relates to the rule of faith, that is to say, to the principal doctrines of religion, Tertullian and the first Montanists were of the same opinion with the church." (Dupin, vol. 1, p. 96.) Rhenanus, (another Romanist) in his preface to Tertullian's treatise *de Penitentia*, certainly written before he was a Montanist, says, "Let no man wonder that Tertullian speaks nothing [*i. e.* in his treatise on repentance] of the secret or clancular confes-

* *Quis remittit delicta nisi solus Deus ?* Tertullian, *Depuditicia*, ch. 21.

sion of sins ; which, so far as we conjecture, was bred out of the old *Exomologesis*, by the unconstrained piety of men. *For we do not find it at all commanded of old.*"

ORIGEN.

The Romanists give us this passage : "*If we confess our sins, not only to God, but likewise to those who have the power to heal our wounds, our sins will be effaced by Him who has said, I will blot out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist.*" This passage occurs in the 17th Homily on St. Luke.

We have hardly any of the homilies of Origen in the original Greek : those which we have in Latin were translated chiefly by Ruffinus (the above extract is a translation from his Latin), and he took such unwarrantable liberties that Jerome reproached him with it ; and some very learned men have doubted whether the greater part of his translations express the sentiments of Origen at all. But not now to insist on this, take the passage as quoted, and it certainly shows that remission of sins is not *man's* act, but *God's* ; while many a private brother to whom we confess our faults, has *power*, if he be the offended one, to heal by forgiveness ; or, if he be not, has power to comfort us by God's words, and to pray with us even to our *healing*. There is no auricular confession in all this.

CYPRIAN.

From this writer Rome cites a passage which, *she says*, she finds in his Sermon, *de lapsis*. “*Let each one of you confess his faults whilst he is yet in the world ; whilst his confession can be received, and whilst the satisfaction he will offer will be agreeable to God.*”

This reference to Cyprian’s tract on the case of the lapsed, I cannot but consider singularly unfortunate for Rome. A few words of history are necessary for the proper understanding of this beautiful gem of Christian antiquity. After the death of Decius, persecution had ceased, and the church once more breathed in peace. Many, who in the time of persecution had renounced their faith in Christ, to escape martyrdom, now wished to be readmitted to the Church, without any act of public confession and repentance before the Church ; in other words, without passing through what Tertullian has described for us, as constituting the *exomologesis* of the early Church. It was with reference to such persons that Cyprian wrote this tract, in which he beseeches them to consider the heinousness of their sin, and exhorts them to give all proper outward proofs of their sincere sorrow for it ; as, without these, they could not be restored to the communion of the Church. It is evident also, from the tract, that even then the severity of the ancient discipline had been, as Cyprian thought, too much relaxed. A few passages might suffice for my purpose, while of the tract at large (of which a very faithful translation into English was made by Marshall) I

might content myself with saying, not one sentence can be found in it relating to the auricular confession of Rome.

But it affords such a beautiful specimen of a true Christian bishop, that I am sure you will forgive me if I dwell for a time upon it.

“The Church, we see, (thus he writes,) my beloved brethren, hath once more peace restored to her.—The happy expected day is come to all our wishes, wherein, after the dismal terrors of a long and thick darkness, the glorious light of the Gospel is now at liberty to shine upon the world with a full and undiminished lustre.” After a beautiful allusion to those who had been faithful in persecution, he thus proceeds: “But amidst all our triumphs and gratulations for the crowns of our martyrs, and for the honors which our confessors have gained by their glorious achievements, and for the unshaken firmness of the rest of our brotherhood, we have this sad abatement of our joy, that the enemy hath made some fatal inroads upon the flock of Christ.” He then thus alludes to the causes why God had sent persecution on them: “All were set upon an immeasurable increase of gain, and forgetting how the first converts to our holy religion had behaved under the personal direction and care of our Lord’s apostles, their love of money was their darling passion and the master-spring of all their actions. The religion of the clergy slackened and decayed; the faith of priests and deacons grew languid and inactive; works of charity were discontinued, and an universal license and corruption prevailed every where.” Then came the persecution, and he thus depicts

the conduct of some of the lapsed: "Some, to their shame and scandal be it ever remembered, did not stay to have the question put to them, before they denied their Lord and Saviour; they did not wait for the formality of being apprehended, but advanced of their own accord to the place of sacrifice. Unhappy wretch! wherefore dost thou take the needless pains of carrying thither a victim with thee to sacrifice? Thou art thyself that victim! Thou makest a sacrifice of thine own soul! Thou hast offered up at this altar thine own salvation, and thy faith and hope are consumed in its fatal fires."——"Nor do I mean by any thing I have said upon the case of our fallen brethren to load it with undue aggravations; I would only persuade them to seek their peace in a proper manner, and to give THE CHURCH a becoming satisfaction." He then adverts to the relaxed state of discipline: "We have a new mischief broken out among us. Through the rashness of some in granting, and of others in asking, the terms of communion are become too easy, the reins of discipline are shamefully relaxed, in opposition to the vigor and firmness wherewith the whole tenor of the gospel and the laws of God and Christ have commanded them to be held. In short, a delusive insignificant absolution is at random given, which will prove dangerous to the givers and useless to the receivers."——"The peace thus given by them, on such easy terms, is far from answering its genuine designs and purposes; 'tis a stratagem whereby the great and subtle enemy of our souls makes his attempts upon our brethren who have fallen in the late grievous trial."——"Let no persons, therefore, venture to impose upon and deceive

themselves; no man's pity can here avail them. *No one can pardon the sins committed against God but He alone who bare our sins, who suffered for our sakes, and whom God delivered up for our offences.* It is impossible that man should be greater than God, or equal to him; nor is it therefore within the power of man, who is the servant, to forgive in any case a sin of so deep a dye as this," &c.

Then follows presently the passage which Rome relies on, and pretends to quote, and in which she *interpolates* words to suit her purpose. The genuine sentence is this:—"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every one of you who have offended, make an humble and solemn confession of his sin, whilst he is yet in the land of the living." (Here Rome commences her own additions, about receiving confession, and making satisfaction.) The genuine tract thus proceeds:—"Let him turn unto the Lord his God with all his heart, and express a becoming sense of his transgression in all humility and contrition of spirit. He himself, indeed, hath taught us how we should address him for pardon: 'Turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments.'"—"This hath been the practice of men who were meek and sincere, humble, and holy; this was the way wherein they sought for mercy at the throne of grace: yet now, the case is so far altered, that even such as have denied their Lord, are loth to submit to any penance for it, or even to implore his pardon."—"Wherefore I again exhort, persuade, and entreat you, that you would submit to a

full and proper penance for your sin, and give all becoming proofs of your hearty sorrow for it." He then describes the penance he means:—"You must ask more fervently, must continue a great while instant in prayer and supplication, must spend whole days in sorrow and whole nights in tears, and every hour of your time in mourning and lamentation."—"He [God] can grant you the forgiveness for which you are so earnest, and so much in haste ; he can mitigate the sentence denounced upon your sin ; he can pardon his humble supplicants, his sincere penitents, such as bring forth fruits meet for repentance."—"He who shall thus endeavor to appease the anger of God ; he whom an humble sense of his sin shall inspire with greater degrees of constancy and firmness for any future encounter, will draw on himself the favorable assistance of God, and will contribute as much to the joy and triumph of the *Church* as before he had contributed to her dejection and grief ; nor will he then merely receive the pardon of his sin, but even a crown of glory."

Thus speaks Cyprian ; and if I have dwelt on his treatise, it was that you might see, 1st, the gradual relaxation of discipline of which I spoke in the beginning of my letter ; 2d, that Cyprian had no idea of any confession here, but a public one, for the public wrong done to the *Church* ; 3d, that in his view no being but God could forgive sins ; 4th, that He for Christ's sake would forgive them on sincere repentance ; 5th, that his (Cyprian's) office was to *declare* this to the sinner ; and 6th, how unscrupulously Cyprian could be altered to accomplish a purpose.

LACTANTIUS.

The Romanist quotes thus a passage from the 17th chapter of the 4th book of his divine institutions. He is speaking of the Jewish rite of circumcision:—

“God, who by his infinite bounty has provided us with all the means necessary to salvation, has traced out to us in the circumcision of the flesh the true idea of penance, in order that if we discover our hearts naked—that is to say, if we confess our sins, to please God—we may obtain of Him the pardon which he refuses to those who obstinately persist in their evil ways, and who conceal the sins which they have committed.”

If Rome may be permitted to *translate* as she pleases, no doubt she will make passages enough to sustain all her corruptions. Let us go to the original Latin of Lactantius, and we shall find very little of confession to a priest, and satisfaction, as part of Romish penance. I quote from the Leipsic edition of 1739:—“*Ut si cor nudaverimus, id est, si peccata nostra confessi, satis Deo fecerimus, veniam consequamur,*” &c.; which I should thus translate:—“*So that if we make naked our hearts—that is, if confessing our sins—we make satisfaction to God, or (literally) do what is enough for God [satis Deo fecerimus], we may obtain pardon,*” &c.:—and that, in the view of Lactantius, we are to “make naked our hearts” by “confessing our sins” to God, and not to man, is conclusively proved by the last words of the sentence, which the Romanist does not translate at all, viz.: “*qui non faciem, sicut homo, sed intima et arcana pectoris*

intuetur ;” *who does not, like man, look upon the face, but upon the hidden things and secrets of the breast.* This is certainly somewhat different from the phrase, “if we confess our sins, to please God.” And here it may be well to add, that this phrase, “to satisfy God,” is one which seems to be usual with Lactantius ; though, as he explains it, he means by it simply repentance for sin, and amendment of life. Thus, in his 5th book, ch. 15, he says, speaking of the return of Christians who have fallen into sin, “Seeing that it is lawful to satisfy God, and no one is so bad a worshipper of God but that, power being given him, he may return to an appeased God, and indeed with increased devotion.” And again, in his 6th book, ch. 24, he thus writes :—“Nor need any one fail, or despair of himself, if, either overcome by inclination, or impelled by lust, or deceived by error, or coerced by force, to unrighteousness of life, he fall ; for it is possible for him to be brought back and delivered, if he repent him truly of his wickedness, and, turning to better things, may satisfy God.”

But Rome relies on another quotation from this author :—“*As every sect and denomination of heretics deem themselves Christians, and theirs to be the Catholic Church, it is proper they should know that that Church is the true one in which there is confession and penance, which heals the sins and wounds to which the weakness of our flesh is subject.*” This passage, says the Romanist, occurs in his work against the Novatians. A bolder piece of unblushing impudence is not to be found in the annals of literary fraud. Lactantius never wrote a work against the Novatians. There was,

indeed, a spurious book put out under his name ; but every patristic student knows that the learned all pronounce it to be a forgery. The Romanist Dupin will not class it among the writings of Lactantius. Indeed, the passage itself is so obviously manufactured to make Rome the true Church, and confession and penance *plenary* evidence of it, that a scholar should be ashamed to refer it even to the times of Lactantius, much less to attribute it to the classical pen of the Christian Cicero.

ATHANASIUS.

The passage here adduced is said to occur in the latter part of a sermon by Athanasius on the words: "Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming thither you shall find a colt tied," &c.

"Let us examine ourselves whether our chains be loosed, that we may proceed better. If they be not loosed, deliver thyself over to the disciples of Jesus ; for there are some present who can loose thee, pursuant to that power which they have received from the Saviour. For whatsoever you shall bind (says he) on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

Now there is such a sermon, and it does contain these words, and it is printed in some of the Latin editions of Athanasius ; and so is a great deal beside that Athanasius never saw. And it so happens that this very sermon by name, is enumerated by that learned Romanist Dupin, among the supposititious or spurious works of Athanasius, and

some of the editions do not contain it. But there is another reason to induce the student to reject this passage as coming from Athanasius. You perceive that in it, the priestly power is rested on the passage about "binding" and "loosing." Do you not remember that in the beginning of my third letter, I had occasion to refer to this same passage; and then quoted Augustine and Jerome to show how the Church in their day understood it? They did not interpret it as Athanasius is here made to do, and yet all three were contemporaries. Had Athanasius interpreted it at all, I am apt to believe he would have concurred with Augustine and Jerome. Three such eminent men could not have been ignorant of what was the interpretation of that day, especially in a case where the interpretation directly affected the *practice* of each individual Christian.

BASIL.

The Romanists adduce his "authority," as they term it, in the following passages:

"One must necessarily confess his sins to those who have received from God the dispensation of his mysteries." If he confessed them openly *in the Church* he would do this.

Rome also adduces the following:

"As one does not show the infirmities of his body to every person indifferently, but only to those who understand how to cure them, so one should not make a confession of his sins, except to those who are able to apply a remedy to them."

Now, without stopping to inquire, but granting, if you

please, that this sentence is *quite* authentic, just let us see who it is that Basil believes can “apply a remedy” to sins, and consequently we shall see to whom he thinks we ought to confess them.

In his books against Eunomius (lib. v.) he thus speaks : “*If the power of remitting sins has been given to no one, as is certain, then God alone can remit them.*”

Hear him again on Psalm xxxvii. v. 8.—“*I do not make confession with my lips, to appear to the world ; but inwardly in my heart, where no eye sees ; I declare my groanings unto Thee alone who seest in secret, I roar within myself ; for I need not many words to make confession ; the groanings of my heart are sufficient for confession, and the lamentations which are sent up to Thee, my God, from the bottom of my soul.*”

AMBROSE.

This good man is very sadly misrepresented by Romish writers. In his second book on penance, ch. 3, they tell us, he says : “*That the Lord has ordained that the greatest sinners should be admitted to the participation of the heavenly gifts, provided they do penance for their sins with all their heart, acknowledging themselves guilty by a sincere confession.*” What he really says is this : “*Provided, from the whole heart, and with an open confession of sin (manifesta professione peccati) they show true repentance ; then the grace of the heavenly sacrament may be again poured out on them.*”*

* Ambrosii Opera. Basle. 1560. Tom 3, p, 201,

In fact, it is bold impudence or gross ignorance that will pretend to cite Ambrose as advocating the auricular confession of Rome. Let him speak for himself.

*“Men lend their ministry in the remission of sins, but not as having a right to absolve. They pray, and God pardons.”**

Again :—*“Tears wash away sin, which men are ashamed to confess with their voice. Weeping provides at once both for pardon and bashfulness ; tears speak our faults without horror ; tears confess our crimes without any offence to modesty or shamefacedness.”†*

Again, speaking of St. Peter's tears, he says :

“I find not what Peter said, but I find that he wept : I read of tears, but I read not of his satisfaction.”‡

Here he teaches that sorrow before God supersedes all need of confession to man.

JEROME.

The passage adduced from this writer is in Jerome's letter to Heliodorus :

“Far be it from me to say any thing disadvantageous of those who, being the successors of the Apostles, consecrate with their sacred mouth the body of Christ ; by whom we are

* Amb. Op., lib. ix., ch. 18, de Spiritu Sancto.

† *Ibid*, lib. x., in Luc. 22.

‡ *Ibid*.

also Christians, and who have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and in some manner judge before the last judgment. The priests have not only power to forgive sins when they baptize, but even after."

Now the Romanists know, or ought to know, that every word of this is rank forgery. It is quite too strong. The author of it was resolved to make testimony enough while he was about it; and so in a few lines he has contrived to drag in "the successors of the Apostles," and transubstantiation, and "the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" and that priests in confession are "judges," and may "forgive sins." Now hear what a really learned Romanist says about this letter to Heliodorus; he says, it is a "*fabulous fiction, unworthy of credit.*"*

But I am fearful of wearying you, and therefore without further notice of the perversions and unfair translations of Rome, must be content to give you passages from the early Christian writers utterly at variance with the Romish doctrine of confession.

HILARY.

In his comments on Psalm li., speaking of David's confession to God, he says :

"He teaches us that we must confess to none but Him who has made the olive fruitful by the hope of His mercy for ever and ever."

* Dupin, Ecc. Hist., Century 5th, p. 103.

AUGUSTINE.

In his "Confessions," book x. ch. 3 :

"What have I to do with men that they should hear my confessions as though they could heal all my diseases?"

In his 23d Homily, ch. 8 :

"Believe as true, that man cannot remit sins."

On the 32d Psalm, speaking of David's words, according to his version of them ; "I said I will pronounce or declare my own wickedness against myself unto the Lord, and so thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart," he proceeds :

"He had not yet pronounced it, but only promised that he would pronounce it, and yet God forgave him. He had not yet pronounced it, but only in his heart ; his confession was not yet come to his mouth, yet God heard the voice of his heart ; his voice was not yet in his mouth, but the ear of God was in his heart ; which implies, that God accepts and pardons the penitent and contrite heart, even before any formal declaration is made by vocal confession either to God or man."

CHRYSOStOM.

In his 31st Homily on Hebrews :

"I bid thee not to bring thyself upon the stage, nor to accuse thyself unto others ; but I advise thee to observe the Prophet's direction, reveal thy way unto the Lord, confess thy sins before God, confess them before the judge : praying, if not with thy tongue, yet at least with thy memory ; and so look

to obtain mercy. It is better to be tormented with thy sins now than with the torment that shall be hereafter. If you remember them now, and continually offer them to God, and pray for them, you shall quickly blot them out ; but if you forget them now, you will then remember them against your will, when they shall be brought forth before the whole world, and be publicly exposed upon the stage before all friends, enemies, and angels."

Again, in his Homily on Penitence :

" It is not necessary that thou shouldst confess in the presence of witnesses ; let the inquiry after thy sins be made in thy own thoughts ; let this judgment be without any witness ; let God only see thee confessing."

Again, in his 30th Homily :

" I beseech you, make your confession continually to God. For I do not bring thee into the theatre of thy fellow-servants, neither do I constrain thee by any necessity to discover thy sins unto men ; unfold thy conscience before God, and show Him thy wounds, and ask the cure of Him. Show them to Him, who will not reproach thee, but only heal thee : for though thou confess not, He knows all. Confess therefore that thou mayest be a gainer ; confess that thou mayest put off thy sins in this world, and go pure into the next, and avoid that intolerable publication that will otherwise be made hereafter."

Again, in his Hom. iv., de Lazaro :

" Why art thou ashamed, and blushest to confess thy sins ? Dost thou discover them to a man that he should reproach thee ? Dost thou confess them to thy fellow-servant that he

should bring thee upon the open stage? Thou only showest thy wound to Him, who is thy Lord, thy Creator, thy Physician, and thy Friend. And He says to thee, I do not compel thee to go into the public theatre, and take many witnesses; confess thy sin in private to Me alone, that I may heal thy wound, and deliver thee from thy grief."

You can now judge how far the Church of Rome is historically accurate, when she says that her doctrine of auricular confession was always held in the Church of Christ.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

The next assertion of Rome is that auricular confession is essential to salvation; and further, that its purpose is to obtain a sacramental absolution of all sins committed *after baptism*.

The first of these propositions is, in truth, made by Rome dependent on the last. Her view is that sins committed *after baptism* can be remitted no otherwise than by a priest in the sacrament of penance; that of this sacrament of penance, auricular confession is an indispensable part; that consequently, he who dies without such confession, dies without remission of his post baptismal sins, and is necessarily damned.

The dogma of any thing being *essential* to salvation, but repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is one certainly which is nowhere *expressly* taught in Scripture. The Romanist, therefore, resorts to inference, and insists on it, that in repentance (or penance as he calls it) is included confession. Let it be granted; the question then arises, *what is confession?* The dispute between the

Romanist and Protestant is on the *proper* answer to this very question. Now the Romanist must prove beyond a question that *auricular confession* and *no other* can possibly be meant, before he asserts such confession to be, as an indispensable part of repentance, *essential* to salvation. But we hope we have shown that he cannot do this. Therefore, however true it may be that repentance is essential, it is false logic *thence to assume* that *auricular confession* is essential as a part of repentance ; for this, as I have said, is the very point in dispute, and may not be assumed, but in a matter of such great importance must be incontestably *proved*.

Beside, Augustine and Chrysostom (with many others), whom Rome deems saints, did not believe in the necessity of auricular confession to salvation, as we have seen from their own writings. Both thought that forgiveness might be had without it. Does Rome mean to say that they have been damned ? Certainly not, for she has canonized them, informally at least, by calling them saints. Then, according to Rome's own showing, a belief in auricular confession is not necessary to salvation.

As to the sins remitted in auricular confession, you will remember that the system of Rome expressly confines them to those that are *after baptism*, and for *these* penance is required. Now let us see how this will agree with Rome's teachings elsewhere. As you know, our version of the Bible is condemned as heretical by Rome, and she has her own, in which the verb which we have translated "*repent*," or the noun which we have rendered "*repentance*," are by her, in every instance of their occurrence, respectively ren-

dered, “*do penance,*” and “*penance.*” She has chosen in this to follow a *Latin translation* of the original Scriptures, and not the original itself. Thus we have, “*do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” By the way, this was the language of the *forerunner* of our Lord. We cannot but ask, How then did Christ, as they say, institute penance, if John was preaching it as a religious duty *before* Christ commenced his public ministry?

Again, we have St. Peter saying to Simon Magus, “*do penance, therefore, for this thy wickedness.*” By the way, again, why did not Simon Magus immediately say to St. Peter, “*holy father, shrive me?*” He was so much alarmed that he begged the Apostle to pray that God would avert from him the evils he feared from his wickedness: nay, why did not St. Peter, when Simon asked his prayers, immediately bring him to the *Confiteor*? Why did he give him no other advice but to repent and pray for himself?

But I must not detain you long with the false translations the Romanists have made of the Scriptures. There is a treasure-house of these falsifications in what is called the Bourdeaux Testament, printed in 1686, by the Royal and University printer, with the imprimatur of the Archbishop, and the recommendation of two doctors of divinity. The book is very scarce, probably no copy of it exists in America. The Church of Rome endeavored to destroy the whole edition in consequence of the odium it brought on their cause. There was a copy in the library of the Duke of Sussex, and from that a reverend gentleman of Montreal was permitted to make extracts. Take a few only:

Acts xiii. 2.—As they ministered to the Lord and fasted.
Bourdeaux.—As they offered to the Lord the sacrifice of
 the mass and fasted.

1 Cor. xi. 2. *Bourdeaux.*—Ye keep my commandments as
 I left them with you *by tradition*.

Jude 5. *Bourdeaux.*—The faith which has once been given
 to the saints *by tradition*.

1 Cor. vii. 10. *Bourdeaux.*—To those who are joined to-
 gether in the sacrament of marriage, I command, &c.

1 Cor. ix. 5. *Bourdeaux.*—Have we not power to lead
 about a sister, a woman to serve us in the gospel, and
 to remember us with her goods, as the other apostles?

1 Cor. iii. 15. *Bourdeaux.*—He himself shall be saved, yet
 in all cases *by the fire of purgatory*.

2 Peter iii. 17. *Bourdeaux.*—There is some sin which is
 not mortal but *venial*.

1 Tim. iv. 1. *Bourdeaux.*—Now the Spirit speaketh ex-
 pressly that in the latter times some will separate them-
 selves from the *Roman faith*, giving themselves up to
 spirits of error, and to doctrines taught by devils.

But to go back to the words “repent” and “repentance.”
 The original Greek, as you are aware, is a compound: the
 verb is μετανοεω, the noun is μετανοια; the preposition μετα
 denoting *change*, the root of the other part is νοος, the *mind*.
 We have therefore a compound which every Greek scholar
 knows means neither more nor less than a change of the
 mind; an operation of the *spiritual* part of man’s nature in
 contradistinction to the *physical*. The grand element of repent-

ance therefore, in the view of the Protestant, is such a change of a man's spiritual perceptions, tastes, &c., as will induce a change in his conduct from sin to holiness. On the contrary, the Romanist's *agite penitentiam*, "do penance," seems primarily to be directed to some act of his *body*; while his penance, *penitentia*, traced to its root *pœna*, punishment, points to the enduring of some bodily suffering as the penance which he is to do. Repentance therefore, as the Protestant understands it, operates directly on the spirit; nay, must begin there; while in the view of the Romanist, penance seems to have more to do with the body than with the spirit; and, if it act on the latter at all, can do so only through the body.

But bearing in mind that Rome's penance is expressly and exclusively for sins *after baptism*, let us take her Bible. In Acts ii. 37, 38, according to our version, we read, "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The Romanist here reads, "*do penance and be baptized.*" But how is this?

Did not Rome tell us that penance was exclusively for the remission of sins *after baptism*? How then happens it that here she teaches us in her own Bible that these persons are to do penance *before* baptism, before they had received the first sacrament, before indeed they were of the Christian

Church? And for what were they to do penance? Rome says it is always for the remission of *post* baptismal sins; but clearly it was not so here; for St. Peter tells them expressly that the *baptism* in the name of Jesus Christ was “for the remission of sins;” and Rome will not repudiate her own doctrine that baptism works *per se* remission of all *ante-baptismal* sins. Here then is one case at least, if Rome be our teacher, in which doing penance is not the indispensable remedy, to be *exclusively* applied to the remission of sins *after* baptism. But there is another difficulty in this case on Rome’s understanding of doing penance. To do penance is to practise bodily austerities, and *takes some time*. Now if you will look at the residue of ch. ii. of the Acts, you will find that these persons followed Peter’s advice at once, and repenting, were baptized “the same day.” Where then was the time necessary for doing penance? One of two conclusions seems therefore to be inevitable; either Rome has here translated the Bible falsely; or she has flatly contradicted her own doctrine. In either case she destroys her claim to our confidence.

I have now hastily gone through the leading features of the Romish doctrine of penance, with the objections that arise in my mind to them. I now proceed to the second head I named in my first letter.

What is the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States on the subject of confession?

Though in the determination of our own faith we of course should look to our own standards only; yet I would, had I time, examine also the faith of our mother Church of

England, to show that she does not hold the dogma of auricular confession any more than we do. I would do it to counteract, as far as I might be able, the mischievous tendency of the opinion, hinted at, if not directly expressed by some, that we differ from the Church of England *doctrinally*. It is not true, I think. We do differ *toto cælo* on the question of "an establishment," and on some others, but on the great body of *doctrinal* truth I am not aware of any difference. There was recently published in New-York, a pamphlet by a Rev. Mr. McLeod, (I think he was so called,) then a presbyter of the Church, whom I have not the honor of knowing; but I have heard it was his boast that he knew more of the family secrets of his parish, through the medium of confession, than were known to the members of the respective families themselves. I have also heard that he has since left the Church, and joined the communion of Rome. This pamphlet was composed of what purported to be extracts from standard English divines, in favor of auricular confession; but the mischief was met by the zeal and learning of the former able editor of the "Churchman," who quietly disposed of the extracts, by showing that they were *garbled*; and by furnishing the reader with a true version; thus at once redeeming the characters of the pious dead, and exposing the character of the either unlearned or dishonest living. You may find Dr. Seabury's review in the "Churchman" of April 21, 1849. An inquiry into the English doctrine of confession is also the less necessary for *you*, inasmuch as a recent pamphlet, emanating as it is said from an honorable Senator of North Carolina, has shown beyond all

controversy, that auricular confession is not and never was the doctrine of the English branch of the Church.

In seeking the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, I think we shall find it by resorting to four sources.

1. The language of her acknowledged standards.
2. The teaching of her most honored and best writers.
3. Her uniform practice since her organization.
4. The acknowledgment of her avowed enemies.

1. *Her acknowledged standards.*

These I take to be the Prayer Book and Homilies. It will not be pretended that, like the Church of Rome, she has any where *expressly* decreed the necessity or duty of *auricular* confession. But she has directed the confession of sins. The inquiry therefore is, whether what she has thus directed is accompanied by any thing which shows that she could have meant *nothing else* but *auricular* confession? For it must not be forgotten that there are other kinds of confession which were well known to the primitive Church; and it may be she means some one or other of these, inasmuch as she claims to adhere to what was primitive. The first place then in the "Common Prayer" which brings confession to our notice, is an exhortation addressed by the minister to the congregation assembled for worship in open church, in which he tells them that we are taught, in sundry places of Scripture, "to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them *before the*

face of Almighty God," &c.—"but confess them," &c., "to the end that we may obtain forgiveness," &c., "by His infinite goodness and mercy." He then proceeds to tell them that though "we ought *at all times* humbly to acknowledge our sins *before God,*" yet it is especially appropriate to do so "*when we assemble and meet together*" (i. e. of course in *public*) for purposes of worship.

Then the rubric speaks of a "*general confession,*" to be said by the *whole congregation*; after the minister, all kneeling."

Then follows a general acknowledgment of sin, made with an audible voice by all, *both minister and people*; and a humble supplication to God for mercy, and grace through our blessed Saviour, to live better.

The rubric then speaks of "*the declaration of absolution or remission of sins,* to be made by the priest alone:" and two forms of this "declaration" then follow. The first is exceedingly specific in setting forth what the Church believes the minister of Christ may do. It declares that God "hath given power and commandment to his ministers to *declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins.* HE (God) pardoneth and absolveth," &c.

Now of this form one or two remarks may help us to reach our doctrine. It was composed for the second edition of the Book of Common Prayer of King Edward VI., and, therefore, was not likely to lean to the dogmas of Rome; but secondly, this second edition "was prepared with the assistance of several distinguished foreign Protestants of the

Presbyterian communion ;” and this very form of declaring absolution was avowedly levelled against the doctrine of Rome on the subject of priestly absolution. Remember, I am not now asking whether it was best to call in such aid. I am concerned here simply to find out the true *meaning*.

The second form is from the liturgy of the Greek Church, and was undoubtedly used both in the Greek and Latin Churches in their primitive state. In fact they had scarce any other until within the last four or five hundred years. This is entirely *precatory* or *petitionary*, and consequently the minister, as such, merely states authoritatively the divine promise of pardon, on the condition of faith and repentance ; and then, on the ground that this condition is fulfilled, begs of God to make His promise good. His act is purely MINISTERIAL. Nor would I dispute with those who rather deem it an *authoritative assurance* of God’s pardon to him who is, at the moment, truly repentant and believing.

Now can we gather that the Church meant auricular confession in any thing we find here ? Certainly not, for 1st, the confession is general ; 2d, is made to Almighty God, and not to the priest ; 3d, is made in an audible voice before the whole Church ; 4th, contains no specific enumeration of particular sins ; 5th, the priest confesses as well as the people ; 6th, is followed not by “I absolve thee,” from the priest, but by “God hath given me power and commandment to say to you, that if you be truly penitent HE pardoneth and absolveth you.”

I infer then, that as *auricular* confession is clearly not to be found here, the Church meant to adhere simply to what was undoubtedly the primitive usage of the Church, viz., a

general confession of sins as the first and most appropriate step in public worship.

Next let us proceed to the office for the Holy Communion. Here is a confession.

The rubric preceding it terms it, as in the former case, “a *general* confession,” and expressly directs it to be made “by the Priest and all those who are minded to receive the Holy Communion.” It is a *public* act. The declaration of absolution that follows, is the second of those considered above; and I presume I need not stop to show that there is no auricular confession here: what has already been said is applicable here, to show that some other sort of confession is meant. But if on this subject reasonable doubt could exist, it would certainly be removed by an examination of the form of exhortation to be used by the minister when he gives “warning” of the communion, which he is always obliged to do upon the Sunday, or some holyday immediately preceding. What is it? “So to search and examine your own consciences;” (exactly as St. Paul taught—“Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup;”) “Examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God’s commandments, and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended either by will, word, or deed, (this certainly includes all possible sin,) there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to *confess yourselves to Almighty God*, with full purpose of amendment of life.” It then proceeds to speak of offences not against God only, but also against a fellow-man, exhorting to restitution and forgiveness of injuries, and to reconciliation with enemies; and the Church authoritatively declares these things to be

a part of the preparation for the Holy Communion. Then it goes on; "if there be any of you who *by these means* cannot *quiet his own conscience* herein,"—what is he to do? Go to auricular confession? Not a syllable of it. Men go to auricular confession for a *judicial sentence of pardon*; but he is to come for "further comfort or counsel;" is to "open his grief" to Christ's minister, "that he may receive such godly *counsel and advice* as may tend to the quieting of his conscience and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness." Now when "comfort, counsel, and advice" to a troubled sinner can be translated into *Ego absolvo te*, &c., then, and not till then, will auricular confession be found here.

But he goes *privately*. Grant it. What then? If a Christian, troubled in mind, voluntarily choose to state his trouble to a minister in whom he has confidence as a godly man, or even to a judicious fellow Christian, who is but a layman, if he seek of them their counsel or their prayers, would Rome deem this auricular confession? Certainly not. Then how does it become auricular confession in our communion service?

Such voluntary resort for godly counsel was doubtless practised in the primitive Church. I know not where our Church has either forbidden or commanded it; it would have been strange had she done either, seeing that the act is a purely voluntary one. She may *advise* it, as here, in *particular* cases, but she has nowhere said to her children, You shall be punished if you do not follow this advice; whereas, Rome has said to her followers, If you go not to auricular confession and get judicial, priestly absolution

before coming to the sacrament, you shall be damned. It must be a mind strangely constituted that can find a parallel in the cases.

Again, when we come to the communion, what says our dear mother, the Church, to us? "*Judge* therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord." She does not send us to any priest to be judged. "Repent ye truly of your sins past." She does not order us to go to a priest that he may impose on us penance.

So when she invites our approach: "Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins." *How* repent of our sins? Evidently according to what she understands by repentance. And how does she understand it? Exactly as she has set it forth in her previous warning and exhortation, and no otherwise. No one may infer because she uses the *words* repentance, confession, and absolution, that therefore, *ex vi termini*, she adopts the *Romish* doctrine of *penance*; and yet this is really the argument of some.

We turn next to the "visitation of the sick." The priest is directed to say in his exhortation, "I require you to *examine yourself and your estate, both towards God and man*, so that accusing and *condemning yourself* for your own faults, you may find mercy at our Heavenly Father's hand, for Christ's sake." After the sick man's assent to the creed, the rubric follows; "then shall the minister examine whether he repent him truly of his sins." He is not directed to question him as to what his sins are, one by one, but be they what they may, as to either number or enormity, he is simply to examine the man as to whether he truly repents

of them. The truth and sincerity of that repentance depend on the sick man, and all that the priest can possibly know is on his word. The Church very properly frames her prayer on the supposition of his sincerity ; for she certainly cannot frame a prayer for God's mercy on the supposition that the person prayed for is a hypocrite ; and in that prayer there is no *absolvo te*, but it is, "O, most merciful God who," &c., "dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent that thou rememberest them no more," &c.—"consider his condition"—"impute not unto him his former sins." Does all this look as if the Church supposed that the priest had any power to forgive him ?

Now the English Prayer Book contains in this office the following. "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, *if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter*, (mark, it is not the general rule, but the exception in a particular case of some special sin or weight on his conscience,) after which confession the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it,) after this sort."

Then follows an absolution concluding with the words, "I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

But none of this is in our Prayer Book. Bishop Brownell remarks on it: "Our reviewers have done well to reject it. Commentators have indeed given a construction to it which may be tolerated, but in its most obvious acceptance, it is too nearly allied to those notions of absolution which have prevailed to such a mischievous extent in the

Roman Church.” I am free to confess that I think when the whole office is taken together it admits of a construction very different from the doctrine of absolution as held by Rome. But be that as it may, certain it is that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States is not affected by it, whatever may be its interpretation, for it is not in her Prayer Book.

Nor was it left out carelessly. You may possibly have heard of the first Book of Common Prayer published after the Revolution, and known as “The Proposed Book.” It was prepared by a committee appointed in the General Convention of 1785, and was proposed to the Church in the several States for consideration; not authoritatively enjoined for use. This committee was composed of Bishop White, Dr. William Smith, of Maryland, and Dr. Charles Henry Wharton, then of Delaware, who had once been a Roman Catholic priest at Worcester, in England. The Church had not in it at that day, three more learned ecclesiastics. This latter named gentleman especially had possessed every desirable advantage in the attainment of theological learning. He was a Jesuit before he left the Church of Rome. He thus speaks of himself: “He was sent to Europe when very young, and after passing through some years of very rigid discipline in a foreign academy, secluded from society, he was induced to take orders among a body of men equally distinguished by their eminence and their fall.”*

* Dr. Wharton’s letter to the Roman Catholics of the city of Worcester, p. 15. Note.

He did not therefore lack a thorough knowledge of the dogmas of Rome. After leaving the Romanists, he addressed to his former flock, the letter from which I have just quoted. In this he explains the reasons of his change; and briefly commenting on certain leading doctrines of Rome, thus writes:

“Since the decision of the Council of Trent, it is become an article of your faith ‘that a priest has power to forgive sins.’ But Peter Lombard, the famous *master of the sentences*, the Newton, the Aristotle of scholastic divines, was so far from discovering this prerogative in the Scriptures, that he rejects it at large, and is supported in his opinion by almost all the ancient schoolmen of his time.* Their doctrine is thus compendiously delivered by Cardinal Hugo, who lived at that period: ‘The priest cannot bind or loosen the sinner *with* or *from* the bond of the *fault*, or the *punishment*; but only *declare* him to be bound or loosened; as the Levitical priest did not infect or cleanse the leper, but only declared him infected or clean.’”† (See Dr. Wharton’s letter, p. 20., Ed. 1784, Philadelphia.) I mention these particulars merely as historical facts, to be borne in mind in determining how far such a man as Dr. Wharton was likely to countenance the introduction into our Prayer Book of auricular confession and priestly absolution.

It so happens that I have now before me the original MSS. of this committee, containing, in different parts of them, the handwriting of each of the three gentlemen. In Dr. Whar-

* Lib. 4 Sentent. dist. 8. c. f.

† In Matth. 26.

ton's appears the following: "In the visitation of the *sick*, instead of the absolution as it now stands [in the English Prayer Book is meant] insert the declaration of forgiveness which is appointed for the communion service; or, either of the two collects which are taken from the commination office and appropriated to Ash Wednesday may be used." If you will turn to our office for Ash Wednesday you will find the two prayers alluded to, one of which expressly declares of God, "to thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins." I have also the "Proposed Book" before me; it was printed in Philadelphia by Hall & Sellers, 1786. On turning to the visitation of the sick in it, I find a rubric, copied in part from that of the Church of England, as follows: "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession the minister shall say:" and then, pursuant to Dr. Wharton's suggestions, follows the shorter declaration of absolution, as it stands in the communion service, and in the order of morning prayer.

But this is not all, for, after we had obtained the Episcopate, in the General Convention of October, 1789, the Prayer Book underwent its final revision, when even this rubric and shorter declaration of absolution were *entirely stricken out* of the office for the visitation of the sick.

So that from this little historical sketch you can judge how far it was in the minds of the framers of our liturgy to countenance, in any part of it, auricular confession and priestly absolution.

Now we come to the "visitation of prisoners."

All that has reference to the subject we are considering is in the following rubric :

“Then shall the minister examine whether he repent him truly of his sins, exhorting him to a *particular confession* of the sin for which he is *condemned* ; and upon confession, he shall ” (not absolve him, but) “instruct him what satisfaction ought to be made to those whom he has offended thereby ; and if he knoweth any combination in wickedness, or any evil practices designed against others, let him be admonished to the utmost of his power to discover and prevent them.”

“After this confession the minister shall *declare* to him the pardoning mercy of God in the form which is used in the communion service.”

Here remark, the Church exhorts to the special confession of *one* sin only ; auricular confession demands *all*. Observe further, that the object of the confession is not *absolution*, for that, the minister is not directed to give him even after his confession ; but it is twofold, to warn him that if harm to others have already followed from his crime, or if his crime be but one of the links of a chain formed by a combination to carry out a series of crimes, his repentance is defective, if he make not satisfaction for the one, and interpose not to prevent the success of the combination to commit others. But let us test this by a common sense view. Let us suppose a minister acting under this rubric, and that a felon convict confesses to him a combination on the part of accomplices at large, to commit some other crime ; is there a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States who would hold himself bound by his con-

science to make himself a colleague with felons, an accessory before the fact to a felony? Would he, as an upright man, hesitate to communicate what he had thus heard, in order to prevent the crime? You answer *no*. Then there can be no Romish auricular confession taught by the Church here, for that, as you have seen, would bind him to hold his peace, though it should cost the "death of a man," or the "safety of the republic."

But let us look a little at the history of this office. It is not in the English Prayer Book; we took it from the Irish book; and in the MS. minutes of our committee to which I have before referred, I find in the handwriting of Dr. Wharton, the following:

"A form of prayer and visitation of prisoners for notorious crimes, and especially persons under sentence of death, being much wanted, the form entitled, "Prayers for persons under sentence of death," agreed upon in a Synod of the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the clergy of Ireland, at Dublin, in the year 1711, as it now stands in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of Ireland, is agreed upon and ordered to be adopted, with the following alterations, viz.:

"For the absolution take the same declaration of forgiveness, or either of the collects above directed for the visitation of the sick."

Accordingly in the "Proposed Book," the rubric was framed as it now stands, and the shorter declaration of absolution, as in the communion service, was directed to be used. It has so remained ever since.

Let us now turn to the homilies, and we shall then have finished examining the language of our standards of doctrine. I will quote but one passage from the homily on repentance : it has already been urged very pertinently and forcibly by the Rev. Mr. Hanson, of Waddington, N. Y., in his tract on the doctrine of repentance ; but as you may not have seen that, I will give you the passage :

“If we will, with a sorrowful and contrite heart, make an unfeigned confession of our sins unto God, he will freely and frankly forgive them, and so put all our wickedness out of remembrance, and before the sight of His Majesty, that they shall be no more thought upon. Hereunto doth pertain the golden saying of the Holy Prophet David, where he saith in this manner, ‘Then I acknowledged my sin unto thee, neither did I hide my iniquity. I said I will confess against myself wickedness unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the ungodliness of my sin.’ These are also the words of John the Evangelist. ‘If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to make us clean from all our wickedness,’ which ought to be understood of the confession that is made unto God. Besides this there is another kind of confession, which is needful and necessary. And of the same doth St. James speak after this manner, saying, ‘Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be saved.’ As if he should say, open that which grieveth you that a remedy may be found. And this is commanded both for him that complaineth, and for him that heareth, that the one show his grief unto the other. The true meaning of it is, that the faithful ought to acknowledge their offences, whereby some hatred, rancor, grudge or malice having risen or grown among them one to another, that a brotherly reconciliation may be had, without which nothing that we can do can be acceptable unto God, as our Saviour Jesus Christ doth witness himself, saying, ‘When thou offerest thine offering,’ &c. It may also be thus taken that we ought to confess our weakness and infirmities one to another, to the end that knowing each other’s frailness we may the more earnestly pray together unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father.”

And it thus speaks of auricular confession :

“Let us, with fear and trembling, and with a true contrite heart, use that kind of confession that God doth command in His word ; and then doubtless, as he is faithful and righteous, he will forgive us our sins, and make us clean from all wickedness. I do not say, but if any of them do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to some other godly learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God’s word ; *but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been heretofore used in the time of blindness and ignorance.*”

So much then for our standards of doctrine. Next I ask, who of our most honored and learned divines have taught it ?

Is it Bishop White ? Let us hear him :

ON THE ORDINATION SERVICE.—Memoirs of the Church.—p. 203. Philadelphia edit. 1820.

“The alterations in the Ordinal were prepared by the Bishops. There was no material difference of opinion, except in regard to the words used by the Bishop at the ordination of Priests—‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ and ‘whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.’ Bishop Seabury, who alone was tenacious of this form, consented at last, with great reluctance, to allow the alternative as it now stands. The objections to the use made of the aforesaid expressions (the author here speaks his own sense only, not answering for that of any other Bishop) were as follow :

“As to the first ; ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ it is supposed to express the conveyance of the ministerial character which St. Paul recognises as the gift of the Spirit. 1 Tim. 4 : 14, and 2 Tim. 1 : 6 ; and Eph. 4 : 8, 11. And as to the expressions, ‘whose sins,’ &c., he (i. e. the Bishop) supposes it to relate, according to the intention of the service, principally, under due regulation, to the power of passing ecclesiastical censures, and of releasing from them ; and partly

to the declaring of the forgiveness of sins, repented of and forsaken; such forgiveness not to apply, independently on the sincerity of the receiver. But although each of the expressions will thus admit of a good interpretation, which should be given by the clergy as occasion may call for it; yet the words are not necessarily to be used in preference to every other form, in the very act of conveying the ministerial commission. If they are not necessary, they cannot be so proper in the place in which they stand as some other words of more obvious signification. There seems the less reason to stickle for the last of the two clauses, as it was not of very early use in the Church."

ON FORGIVENESS OF SINS.—Lectures on the Catechism. Philadelphia. 1813.—p. 43.

"The design of these Lectures requires, that there should be pointed out where, and on what grounds, our Church differs from the Church of Rome, on the present subject. That Church exacts, as the condition of the forgiveness of sin, confession to a priest. We find no authority for this in Scripture. The passage on which the Council of Trent has principally rested this matter is (John 20: 23,) 'whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Here it is said is a power of loosing and binding; and it cannot be exercised without a special knowledge of the sins which are the objects of the power. The error is partly grounded on the not distinguishing between the sinner and the sin. It is not said, *whatsoever sins*, but *whose soever sins* ye remit. There may be satisfactory evidence of penitence, even where there is not a minute disclosure of all the delinquencies to which it has a relation. Further, if we were to admit the passage in proof of the priestly power, it would not follow that the penitent is under an obligation to resort to it. He might still, for any thing that appears, repair to the original source of pardon; as in the case of a rebellious subject, who should have immediate recourse to his prince, instead of applying to another person under a commission. But it is conceived, that the passage principally relates to the binding under ecclesiastical censures, and to the releasing from them. When these acts take place in the due administration of ecclesiastical discipline, the Great Master ratifies what is

done in His name, and by virtue of his authority. But even in this line, what may be the effect of error or of passion, must be foreign to every fair construction of the text; and much less can we conceive of the Searcher of hearts, as admitting to a share in the exercise of His prerogative a succession of frail, and in some instances, sinful men, who cannot of themselves look beyond the conduct; who may be imposed on not only by an imperfect or by a false confession; but even where no deception is intended, and in consequence of men's imperfect knowledge of their own hearts. By writers on the present subject, there are cited other passages of Scripture, which speak of the confession of sins. But in no one of them is there an injunction to confess to a minister, authorized to apply the grant of pardon in any other way than in that of release from ecclesiastical censure.

Is it Bishop Griswold? Hear him:

OF AURICULAR CONFESSION.—Work on the Reformation. Boston. 1843.—p. 67.

“The next Article which I would mention, is what is called Auricular Confession. The Roman Church makes it imperative on all her members to confess their sins to a priest,—a practice which, like most of their other distinctive principles, adds very much to the power and wealth of their priesthood. It is not only fitting, but the duty of Christians, to *confess their sins one to another*—especially to those whom they have injured, that they may make restitution and obtain forgiveness; and also to confess such faults and offences as others have a right to know. But there are many secrets which, though they may be connected with what in God's sight is sinful, had better not be known to man. And that laymen are bound to confess to priests, any more than priests to laymen, no good reason, nor divine authority, can be given.”

Again:—

“That men should be willing that such questions should be put to their wives, and sisters, and young daughters in the confessional, as are found even in the published rules of that Church, has seemed to me strange and astonishing. One who had been educated among the Papists, says, ‘I learned (in the confessional) more sins than ever I had heard

of when conversant in the world.' What effect many of the questions which are known to be put to females must have on the priests themselves, may easily be imagined. That the people of this our free country should have such awakened suspicions and fears of the private meetings of the people called Freemasons, who are *men* only, and they respectable members of society, mingling with the community in all the affairs of life, and yet manifest such apathy respecting the secret of the confessional, and of men and women wholly retired from the view of the world, has long to me seemed unaccountable."

Is it Bishop Hobart? Hear him in his charge of 1819:

"THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCHMAN STATED AND EXPLAINED, IN DISTINCTION FROM THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME," &c.—p. 25.

"The Churchman only considers a general absolution as an edifying and consolatory part of the public service. The Church of Rome makes auricular confession—the private confession to the priest, by every individual, of all his sins of thought, word, and deed—an indispensable condition of forgiveness. *The Churchman justly deems auricular confession, and private absolution, an encroachment on the rights of conscience—an invasion of the prerogative of the Searcher of hearts—and, with some exceptions, hostile to domestic and social happiness, and licentious and corrupting in its tendency.*"

Is it Bishop Ravenscroft? Bishop Ravenscroft! I am very sure, my dear friend, that to you and me, and many others of our friends, (some of them now among the oldest and most honored of the clergy of North Carolina,) it is quite needless to produce evidence that neither auricular confession, nor any other peculiar dogma of Rome, formed any part of the faith of our good old father. For myself, I care not who makes the assertion that Bishop Ravenscroft directly or indirectly countenanced auricular confession; *on my own personal knowledge*, I pronounce the assertion to

be incorrect. Let me bear my testimony. That good old man, who was instant in season and out of season in teaching us Christ's truth while he lived, has gone to God. He is not here to answer for himself. He left behind him nothing save the precious memory of his piety, his zeal, his love for the Saviour, his emphatically *Protestant* principles, and his manifold labors for Christ and his Church. Be it ours to guard the precious legacy. It belongs more particularly to that part of the vineyard in which he toiled. Those who knew Bishop Ravenscroft, as we knew him, must not, without a word, permit him, now that he is in his grave, to be, I will not say calumniated, but misrepresented by those who knew him not.

As you are aware, few were better acquainted with his theological views than I was. He directed my own studies. There were but few points in theology on which I did not hear him express his opinion; for you doubtless well remember the fearless and manly frankness with which he was accustomed to speak his thoughts unreservedly on all doctrinal points. I know, therefore, from his own lips, what he thought of Rome's corruptions. I owe it to truth and his memory to say that particularly were *papal supremacy*, *transubstantiation*, and *auricular confession*, unqualifiedly condemned by him. The immoral tendency of the latter was a theme on which especially he was just the man to speak with great earnestness and force, in strong and decided terms of condemnation.

Most true it is that he had a deep sense of the importance and dignity of the Christian ministry, as a part indis-

pensable of that Church of which Christ is the head. But it was no *personal* importance or dignity that he saw in it; it was official, and to be valued because it was a part of Christ's system, intended for the *comfort* of men; not to be perverted into a device for trampling on the uninformed, and bringing them into subjection to an odious tyranny, by obtaining the knowledge of their most secret thoughts and actions, under the pretence of saving them from damnation. He knew no such occupation, nor deemed this any part of his calling to the performance of holy functions; as his whole ministerial life will attest. And yet he both knew and exercised his powers and duties in the, to him, painful application of discipline. In short, he looked on the priesthood as a *ministry*, not a *magistry*, in the literal sense of those terms.

But when he came to speak of *repentance*, he treated it not as a matter between man and a priest, but as a far more solemn transaction between man and his God. He made its foundation to consist of self-abhorrence and self-loathing on account of spiritual impurity, clearly discerned and felt by the sinner. He made that impurity a load on the soul so weighty that the sinner was obliged by his very agony of conscience to seek alleviation; and he taught him to seek pardon and forgiveness directly of God, through the precious blood of Christ, and through nothing else. He taught him that he must abandon sin, *all* sin. Richard Cecil has said that no man can preach effectually beyond his own spiritual experience. Our good old father in this matter did preach his own experience; for I have heard him, with the tears streaming

down his cheeks, tell the story of his own sense of sin, his remorse of conscience, when God in his mercy opened his eyes to the perception of his true condition. He went to no priest ; he sought his own chamber, and no being was with him there but God ; no book did he have there but the Bible ; he read, he prayed, he bowed in broken-hearted contrition, he cried to God, imploring that mercy might be shown him for Christ's sake. He thus, and thus only, found mercy and pardon. Bishop Ravenscroft teach auricular confession ! He would as soon have thought of selling indulgences to sin ; or of performing masses to release departed souls from the torments of purgatorial fire.

And as to repentance for sins *after baptism*, he never thought of the intervention of the priest to absolve them. Have I not seen him when, in the interior of the State, necessity compelled us to seek the shelter, at night, of some humble log habitation, and to share the same apartment, nay, sometimes the same bed ; have I not seen his devotions, heard his groans, looked on his tears, listened to his sorrowful self-reproaches for his early life of worldliness and sin, and watched him as it were wrestling in prayer with God, humble as a little child ? Yes, verily ; and I can truly say that never saw I any man, the intensity of whose self-abasement, penitency, and fervency in devotion, appeared to me like that of Bishop Ravenscroft. I used to think that he felt as Augustine must have done when he wrote his "Confessions." Oh no, my friend, you may tell the theological tyros of this day, that the good old man believed in whispered confession to a priest, and that the priest had, there-

upon, power to forgive sins ; you may labor to pervert his words, and mystify his meaning to prove your assertion, and you may gull their too easy credulity ; but you will never make the old Churchmen of North Carolina, who knew *him*, believe what *they know* to be a falsehood so gross and posterous.

We come now to our next source of information in determining what the Protestant Episcopal Church believes on the subject of auricular confession. What has been her *practice* ?

If she really holds to the view of Rome, then are we constrained to admit that all our earlier bishops, with the venerable Bishop White at their head, must either have been very hypocritical and wicked men, or else exceedingly ignorant ; for no fact is more notorious than that from our organization as a Church, almost up to this hour, such a practice as that of habitual secret confession of sins to a priest, and absolution thereupon, never obtained among us. And yet during all this time, not a bishop of them all ever raised his voice to remonstrate against the wilful disregard by the whole Church, clerical and lay, of a duty, the performance of which, as we have been told of late, offers the *only* mode of remission of sin *after baptism* !

For sixty long years those who were set over our fathers and ourselves in the Lord, have suffered those fathers to go down to the grave without seeking remission of their sins ; nay, have themselves gone into eternity unshriven ; have, in our own days, let us, in our tears, lay our own holy dead in the sepulchre, in the humble, but, as they

knew, unfounded hope of finding them again in the resurrection of the just ; and yet, while life still lingered, ere the flickering taper was quite extinguished,—while with a sense of feeling sharpened, by our agony, to exquisiteness, our fingers sought to find a fast failing pulse, and in our suppressed breathing we stood by the bedside of our dying ; have, even amid this agony of years crowded into hours, have suffered our loved ones to be

“ Cut off even in the blossoms of their sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made ; but sent to their account,
With all their imperfections on their head.”

They never whispered to us the duty of confession, never told us of the efficacy of priestly absolution. They buried our dead out of our sight, and knew that they had left them to——damnation !

Now who will dare thus to asperse the holy men who have graced the prelacy of our Church ? Those, whoever they may be, that dare to assert that private confession of sins to a priest, and priestly absolution, are held by the Protestant Episcopal Church to be indispensable to the remission of post-baptismal sins.

But in these latter days, a whisper is borne to our ears that there be those who have found a better and a brighter light whereby to read our doctrines truly, than was possessed by our departed fathers of the Church. The men who framed our expositions of doctrine, we are gravely

given to understand, were not hypocritical, but they were *ignorant* ! It is an insult to their memories to defend them from the imputation. And from whom comes the charge of ignorance ? It surely should be from some one whose claims to learning have been attested by his laborious productions : from some one who has made his own mark among scholars ; it cannot certainly be from men whose intellects would be enriched by the very leavings of the learning of those, whom they, with *ex cathedra* air, so flip-pantly pronounce to have been *ignorant*.

But let it come from what quarter it may, it needs something more than bold assertion to convict of ignorance, before the Church, such men as White and Smith and Wharton (to say nothing of the other members of the Convention of 1789).

The *practice* of the Church, therefore, condemns the doctrine of auricular confession.

We come now to the fourth and last ground on which to test the question.

What is the language of the *enemies* of the Church on the subject ?

And here I must preface my quotations with a few explanatory words.

It so happened that in the year 1813, on a criminal trial in New-York, a clergyman of the Church of Rome was called as a witness, and declined to state what he knew, because it had been communicated to him in the confessional. A long argument was made by counsel for and against his right to refuse to testify. The priest was sus-

tained in his refusal. The report of the speech in support of the refusal of the witness was triumphantly published by some member of the Church of Rome, with a long Appendix, consisting of an elaborate exposition and defence of auricular confession. In that defence he undertakes to show, by precisely such arguments as we have lately seen answered by your distinguished senator, that the Church of England teaches auricular confession and absolution: and he thus proceeds to comment on our Prayer Book:

“But it will not be improper here to take notice that the Book of Common Prayer, published by and with the approbation of the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America in Convention, and which has generally been adopted by said Church since the 1st day of October, in the year of our Lord 1790, does not contain in the exhortation before the communion,” &c. He then proceeds to point out the differences between our Book and that of the English Church, in the communion service, and in the “visitation of the sick.” He then speculates on the causes of the change, indulging in a strain of irony, and in one place using these words:

——— “have always led me to believe that they [our clergy] considered themselves as ministers empowered by Christ to absolve (not to *declare* them to be absolved, as their present revised Book of Common Prayer says),” &c.; and after suggesting several causes, he thus proceeds:

“Be this, however, as it may, I do not think they [meaning Protestant Episcopalians], *at least* no more than the Lutherans, can with any propriety charge that with

being a *licentious practice*, namely, *confession with the use of absolution*, which they themselves once followed as well as we, which they have so very recently left off, and which their own acknowledged mother Church, the Church in England, holds with to this present day.”*

Here, then, we have a Romanist stating that *from our own Prayer Book* he understands us as rejecting confession and absolution, and not practising it. And he understands it precisely as it was meant he should, and as all well informed Romanists in this country understand it. There is not one of them who would take such confession and declaration of absolution as is prescribed in any part of our Book, and substitute it as an equivalent for his doctrine and practice of auricular confession, and sacrament of penance.

One more letter I hope will dispose of the residue of the subject.

* The Catholic Question in America. Appendix, ciii—xciv. New-York (printed by Gillespie). 1813.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

The next point which, as you will remember, I proposed to examine, is this: How far have recent teachings in North Carolina approached to the doctrines of the Church of Rome?

It is a question of delicacy, because most of the teachings alluded to are published under the name of the Bishop of the diocese. I approach it, therefore, with some reluctance, which yields only to my friendship for you, and to a sense of duty. I have respect for the office of a bishop; it was part of my Christian training to respect it. In what I have to say, therefore, I must beg of you to understand that I speak not of the Bishop *personally*; I am concerned only with the *doctrines* that have been published under his name. If these, in my poor judgment, be not the doctrines of the Church, then however much I may regret the necessity which forces me to it, I must, as an honest man, abide by the teaching of the Church, and not by that of the Bishop. I think I know myself well enough to promise that I will not forget the courtesy that becomes a

Christian man when he is controverting what he deems erroneous *opinions* ; controversy with *persons*, God be thanked, I have none.

And I have thought that in this part of my task, it would both relieve *you*, and lessen *my* labor, should I present the matter in a tabular view, and leave you to draw your own inference. Let us then place side by side what Rome teaches, what the Church teaches, and what is taught in the publications of the Bishop of North Carolina.

Rome teaches.

1. That sins are to be distinguished into *mortal* and *venial* : and that for the latter a man cannot be lost or damned.

2. That auricular confession of sin is a *sacrament* instituted by divine command.

The Church teaches.

1. No such distinction : but that *all* sin deserves God's condemnation : and that " the offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for *all* the sins of the whole world, both original and actual ; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.—*Art. xxxi.*

2. " There are *two* sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to

The Bishop teaches.

1. It is " as true now as ever that man sinning *mortally*, or so as to hazard his spiritual life after baptism," &c.—*Pastoral Letter on " The Priestly Office,"* p. 12.

" Besides, as all *mortal* sin, whether known to men or not, cuts us off from Christ," &c.—*Sermon on " Self-examination."* p. 114.

The word "*mortal*," must here be used as distinctive, or it is unmeaning : and when applied to sin, cannot possibly have any correlative but "*venial*" or pardonable.

2. " On this doctrine of *priestly absolution*, the great battle of Christ's authority in the church is to be fought. FOR IN REFERENCE TO THIS, it is to be determined whether

*Rome teaches.**The Church teaches.**The Bishop teaches.*

say, Confirmation, *Penance*, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown, partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed by the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God."

—Article xxv.

"How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his church?"

"*Ans.* Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord."—*Catechism*.

3. That this confession *must* be made *secretly* to a priest.

3. That ordinarily, confession is to be made generally in public worship.

That it *may* be made *privately* to either priest or layman, in accordance with the early usage of the church, for relief of a troubled conscience, for counsel or instruction: and that in all such cases it is done *voluntarily*, and a party sins not who declines to make it.

the *sacramental system* of the Gospel, or its antagonist, *Lutheranism*, is to prevail with us." —*Pastoral Letter on Salisbury Convention*, p. 25.

If the writer does not deem priestly absolution a *sacrament*, this sentence means nothing.

3. "While therefore, *private confession* is not regarded by our branch of the one Catholic church, 'as generally necessary to salvation,' and hence, as in the primitive church, is left to the *voluntary* action of individuals under *contrition*, moving them thereto; yet as priestly *absolution* from all *deadly* sins after baptism, is regarded necessary, it becomes a question for each one to determine, how far the effects of such absolution may or may not depend upon

Rome teaches.

4. Such private confession must include a *particular* enumeration of 'all sins of all sorts.

The Church teaches.

4. That he who would come to the holy communion, and by self-examination, prayer, self-judgment, &c., cannot "quiet his own conscience," so as to remove "all scruples and doubtfulness" from his own mind about coming to the communion, had better, not *must*, apply to some minister of God's word, and "open his grief" or trouble *about coming to the communion*, (not about all his sins, confessing them one by one,) and get "godly counsel and advice," on

The Bishop teaches.

this kind of confession.

"What the church has not enjoined as necessary, may *become so*, however, by the moral state of individuals. What is not imposed as a *condition*, may be, in certain cases required as *means*."—*Pastoral on Salisb. Conv.*, p. 51.

Put as a syllogism it will stand thus:

Priestly absolution of all mortal, post-baptismal sins, is *necessary to salvation*.

But such absolution cannot be had, save on *private confession to a priest*.

Ergo—as a *condition*, or at least a *means*, *necessary to salvation*, private confession *must* be made to a priest.

4. "To insure the effect of *absolution*, this confession, 1. Must embrace sin that separates the soul from communion with Christ. 2. Again, our confession must have in it both the number and right conception of sins in order to bring the soul into a state of remission.—Would they [baptized but ungodly persons] be able under such circumstances to '*take their weight*, ONE BY ONE—examine the *catalogue* of their sins *severally*?' But this *must be done*. —Further, *absolution*

Rome teaches.

5. That the priest has power, as God's vicergerent, to absolve and forgive sins.

6. That the priest, in absolution, acts *judicially*, and not *ministerially*.

The Church teaches.

the subject of approaching the Lord's table.

So too, a prisoner condemned is told to make a "particular confession" only of that *one* sin for which he is condemned.

5. That remission of sins is to be ascribed to God alone, and proceeds from Him upon our repentance and faith. "He [God] pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel."—*Declaration of Absolution*.

6. That the priest is no *judge*, but *ministerially declares* God's absolution of the penitent. It is an authoritative assurance of the

The Bishop teaches.

looks to the *cure of sin* as well as its remission.

—But how can this benefit be secured in the *present* state of confession? How can the physician prescribe in wisdom and *honesty*, without knowing the disease?"—*Pastoral on Salisb. Conv.* pp. 51, 52, 53.

5. "Then, and not till then, will they [the people] discover the depth of their guilt as unfaithful members of Christ's body—discover how helpless and hopeless is their condition as neglecters of the grace of baptism, and violators of baptismal vows, without the extraordinary mercy which God has provided for them through 'the ministry of reconciliation'—perceive the dreadful hazard of that *presumption* which leads such neglecters and violators to trust for pardon to a *vague and general repentance*, a REPENTANCE NOT ACCEPTED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST, who ALONE have charge of the discipline of his church, or THE POWER TO REMIT OR RETAIN SINS."—*Pastoral on Priestly Office*, p. 24.

6. "But, dependant as we are upon Christ, there is an instituted way, instituted by Himself, to his favor. That instrumentality is his

Rome teaches.

7. That in this judgment the priest is infallibly directed by the Holy Ghost.

The Church teaches.

pardon of God to all who have truly complied with God's conditions of pardon.

7. That as there is no judicial character in the priest, he neither needs nor has infallible direction.

The Bishop teaches.

priesthood, to which, as St. Paul saith, 'he hath committed the ministry of reconciliation.' Perhaps some deadly sin, of which we find ourselves guilty, may have sundered the tie that bound us to Christ. But in what way are we to be reconciled? Have we a right to return and be reconciled on our own terms and at our own pleasure, regardless of the *judgment* of that priesthood, regardless of the only authority having in trust 'the ministry of this very reconciliation?' Is the criminal to be made the judge in his own case? The merits of Christ alone can avail as the ground of our restoration to Him, but how are these merits to be applied now except through that *priestly judgment, intercession, and absolution*, authorized and made binding by his express commission, 'whose soever sins ye remit,' &c.—*Sermon on Self-examination*, pp. 112, 113.

7. —"it is the judgment, however fallible, which alone Christ has authorized to guard, so far as a *human judgment under the influence of the Holy Ghost* can guard the returning sinner," &c.—*Sermon on Self Examination*, p. 114, *note*.

Rome teaches.

8. That auricular confession was always the doctrine and usage of the Church of Christ.

9. That auricular confession is *essential to salvation*.

The Church teaches.

8. That penance (including, of course, auricular confession) is not to be counted a sacrament of the Gospel, having been the growth of corruption and abuse of a confession very different from auricular.—*See Article xxv.*

9. That nothing is *essential* to salvation, but true repentance, sincere faith in Christ, and humble obedience to his commands. "Holy Scripture doth set out to us, only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved."—*Article xviii.*

The Bishop teaches.

This is strange. How can a human judgment, brought by Christ himself, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, for the accomplishment of a special object, *fail* in its perfect, heaven-directed accomplishment? Is there a fallible infallibility?

8. "We speak against confession, *penance*, fasting, frequent communions, and the like. But could we know by experience their real bearing as instruments upon the salvation of the soul, I doubt not a horrible dread would come over us for our own peril in decrying them. We take upon ourselves a terrible responsibility in rejecting *that* as a remedy for sin, which *the experience of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church has ever sanctioned*."—Sermon, "*Obedience the way to Knowledge*," pp. 150, 151, of "*The Obedience of Faith*."

9. "Well may she [the Church] encourage us by the hope of *absolution* to seek aid in this momentous work [repentance] from the ministers of God's word! O let us not, dear brethren, from fear of reproach or suffering despise and cast away the holiest privileges of our birthright—the privile-

Rome teaches.

10. That auricular confession is necessary to be made, to obtain *remission of sins after baptism.*

11. That Christ is really and actually present, in body and blood, in the sacrament.

The Church teaches.

10. No such distinction of ante and post-baptismal sins, but that "cursed is every one who continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

11. That in whatever sense our Lord meant, when He said, "this is my body, and this is my blood;" in that sense, the bread and wine are his body and blood in the blessed sacrament: but that we have no revelation enabling us to say *how* they

The Bishop teaches.

ges great, and in some cases at least *indispensable* of that priestly judgment and counsel and guidance provided and ordained for us in the Church of the living God!" Sermon—"The case of the baptized without self-discipline," p. 88 of "The Obedience of Faith."

10. Sins may be committed after baptism—committed *against the vows of the holy covenant* made to God, as represented by his ministers. Hence, they were intrusted with power to remit, upon repentance, such sins, and restore the offenders to the forfeited blessings of their baptismal state."—It is "as true now as ever, that man sinning *mortally*, or so as to hazard his spiritual life after baptism, stands in need of *absolution* from that priesthood, to whom Christ said, "whose soever sins ye remit," &c.—*Pastoral on "Priestly Office,"* pp. 12, 16.

11. Duties of the orders of the Holy Cross, at Valle Crucis:—"to inculcate upon the minds of all within their influence, the sacramental system of the church, particularly Baptismal regeneration, the *real presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist,*

*Rome teaches.**The Church teaches.**The Bishop teaches.*

are His body and blood. That the Romish doctrine of the "real presence" by transubstantiation, (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. —*Article xxviii.*

12. Prayers to be made to the Virgin Mary.

12. Prayers to be made to God only.

and sacerdotal absolution.—*Pastoral on Salisb. Conv*, p. 69.

As I cannot suppose the Bishop would stoop to a quibble on the word *real*, I have thought he used the words in their ordinary acceptation as equivalent to "transubstantiation" in the Romish sense. Perhaps, however, he does not mean them to be so understood.

12. "Some expressions in a little manual at Valle Crucis, were objected to, but as they were promptly altered by the Bishop," &c. —*Pastoral*, p. 24, note.

These expressions are said, (Examination of the *Pastoral*, pp. 68, 69,) to have been prayers to the Virgin Mary, and Saints. And the Bishop is represented as saying in a letter to one of his presbyters: "I feel bound, however, to say, that while I allow no prayers to the Virgin Mary or to Saints, not because they are *wrong in themselves*, but because they are *liable to abuse*, I do still retain," &c.

I submit to you these comparative views without remark. You are as competent as I am to deduce a conclusion.

If to you, the Bishop's teaching shall seem to conflict with

that of the Church, you will at least join with me in commending the plainness with which he has avowed his opinions. For that he deserves respect. Nor is it right to question his motives. Hear his own words: "He may have misjudged; (for who does not sometimes err?) but he claims to have acted with a good conscience both towards God and man." And again, thinking that an inadequate perception of the value and nature of the sacraments was leading to ruinous consequences he says, "the thought furnished (as your bishop hopes for mercy at last) the only motive in the preparation and publication of his *seven sermons* on the 'Obedience of Faith,' and his *Pastoral* on 'the priestly office.' In doing which he boldly avers that he has gone beyond no doctrine of the Church," &c. Now no man has a right to question these statements as to motives. But from the last remark, it is obvious, I think, that the Bishop does not admit that others who differ from him hold the doctrines of the Church *truly*. Hence the question arises, *Who shall settle what that doctrine is?* And this naturally brings me to the consideration of the last point I proposed to consider, viz.: How far are certain claims, made by the Bishop to Episcopal rights and prerogatives, consistent with our constitution and canons?

The Bishop's position, if I understand him aright, is this: that "no resolution [can] be passed in [a diocesan] Convention, implying its right either directly or indirectly to affirm what [the Convention] as a diocese, holds in regard to doctrine, discipline, or worship; or what, in respect to these points, the clergy are bound to teach." (*Pastoral on Salisb. Conv.*, p. 6.)

That in being consecrated, by the Church at large, over the diocese, he was thereby made by the Church "*alone responsible*" to her, for the "doctrine, discipline, and worship" of her children in North Carolina; and that to enable him to meet this responsibility, the Church has endowed him as she has endowed no other man or body of men in North Carolina. She has given him *a special gift of the Holy Ghost, for his office.* (*Pastoral on Salisb. Conv.*, pp. 19, 20.)

Now several deductions may be made from this view of the Bishop's opinions; some of them are undoubtedly correct, while others are as plainly incorrect. The pervading error of the Bishop's argument in support of his views, it appears to me has been accurately pointed out in the pamphlet attributed to your honorable Senator. It consists in not properly discriminating between *ministerial powers* under the existing and undisputed law of the Church, and a *legislative power* over the law of the Church. As to this last (whether it were originally right or wrong to place it where it is placed, has nothing to do with the question) as to the last it now indisputably belongs to the inferior clergy and laity, as a co-ordinate legislative branch, under our constitution, and reaches too, by express declaration, to the several particulars of "doctrine, discipline and worship;" and I remember to have heard Bishop White say, that any attempt to exclude the inferior clergy and laity from the legislative power would have prevented any ecclesiastical organization at all.

Now the first inference from the position of the Bishop of North Carolina is, that the inferior clergy and laymen sitting in Convention, cannot, as representing the diocese, say

aught as to what *is* the doctrine, discipline or worship of the Church. Had he said merely that they could not *change* either, under our ecclesiastical system, he would have been perfectly correct ; but it by no means follows, that because they are interdicted from change (except as the diocese acts by its representation in the *General* Convention), that therefore they may not understand perfectly, and have and express an opinion too, as to what the existing doctrine is. They violate no courtesy and infringe on no right of the Bishop by so doing ; for they did not receive the doctrines of the Church *from him*. Nay, he and they alike received them from a common *superior*, the Church at large. It will not do then to say that clergymen below bishops and laymen cannot meddle with doctrine, even so far as to say *what it is* ; because our Church did expressly permit, 1st, both clergy and laity to agree to, and to assist in setting forth and declaring what she would hold as to doctrine, discipline and worship ; and 2d, does *now* permit them both, by express grant, to have a voice in any proposed change of them. A second point to be deduced from the Bishop's view, (though by no means a *consequence* from *his* premises,) is nevertheless true ; viz. that the Convention as such shall not *dictate to the clergy* either the subjects or substance of their public preaching ; but the laity have an undoubted right to have an opinion both as to the truth of their clergyman's preaching and as to the propriety of his practices ; and more than that, the Church in North Carolina not only recognizes that right, but actually impliedly creates a *duty* from its possession. Thus, suppose a rector in North Carolina should habitually refuse to read in morning prayer

the opening supplications in the litany ; and from his pulpit should openly state that he did not believe our blessed Lord to be divine ; this would touch *doctrine*.

Again, suppose he had two communicants at variance, one rich and influential, and the other poor ; and that he should, without remark or inquiry, admit the rich one to the Lord's table, and refuse to let the poor man come, though he had expressed his sorrow for the variance, begged pardon for all wherein he had done wrong, expressed his earnest desire to be reconciled to and live in love with his former enemy, and prayed that he might come to the heavenly feast : this would touch *discipline*.

Once more, suppose that he should habitually mix up his own extempore prayers with the prescribed morning or evening service, and at the communion should ostentatiously mix water with the wine ; or, instead of putting the consecrated bread into the hand of the communicant, should extend him the paten, and irreverently bid him help himself : this would touch *worship*.

Now what may the laity of such a rector do ? May not the *vestrymen* of that church in North Carolina present him to the Bishop, and prefer charges for any one, or all of these things ? Have you repealed the very first canon that was ever adopted in your diocese, expressly authorizing the *vestries* to present clergymen for any misbehavior inconsistent with their calling and duties ?

And what would be their charges which by the same canon they are bound distinctly to specify ? Would they not be that he taught false *doctrine*, not of the Church ;

unjustly and oppressively administered *discipline* ; and irreverently and irregularly conducted *worship* ? And must they not exercise their understandings, and have a settled creed in their own minds, to distinguish false doctrine from true ? And if they are not to think for themselves, can they distinguish between righteous and oppressive discipline ? And if they may not learn from their Prayer Books how the worship is *ordered*, can they say it is irregular or irreverent ?

But more than this ; the Church recognizes the right of the clergy and laity, sitting in Convention, to have an opinion about doctrine ; aye, and express it too, in a case where that opinion may affect one higher in position than a mere *rector*. I know not how your law is, but I know that in many of the dioceses, a Convention (including inferior clergy and laymen) may *present a bishop*, may prefer charges against him for *teaching unsound doctrine* ; that is, such as is inconsistent with the doctrine taught in her standards by the Church herself, to her children of both clergy and laity.

For it will not do to say that the Church has not taught the laity as well as the clergy ; that she does not mean them either to think upon, or understand God's truth for themselves. Look to the *Catechism* ; look to the language of the laity in *confirmation*, implying that they understand baptism ; look to the people's responses in the daily morning and evening prayer ; nay, look to the very name of the book containing our formularies for worship—it is *COMMON* prayer ; common, blessed be God, alike to ministers and

people. Now, who will pretend that the Church does not intend and expect the people to exercise their understandings; to think, to learn, to know from the Church herself, speaking through that sublime Book of our devotions, the truth of the ever living God, as revealed in our adorable Saviour? And *once* knowing, understanding, and receiving it, so as intelligently to use their knowledge when they join in her holy offices, where has the Church said, that they become suddenly oblivious of the same blessed truths when they hear aught that contradicts them? The people, once taught the truth, and taught to love it, cannot be thus made to forget it upon the *ipse dixit* of any one. It is no part of the design of the Church that they should ever forget it.

I have already said that under our constitution, the Convention of the diocese can make no *change* in our doctrine, discipline, or worship. Let me now add that *the Bishop has no more right to make a change than the Convention*. Neither party has it. *It belongs to the General Convention alone*. If one may not touch the subject, so neither may the other; if one may not pervert the truth of doctrine by his private interpretation, so no more can the other, for the doctrine of our branch of the Church is, in the first instance, of *public* interpretation only. All that either bishops, priests, deacons, or laymen have to do, is alike to receive it. And if doubt arise as to what it truly is, not one has power authoritatively to settle that doubt. Why? Because *in our Church, at least, all have agreed that it shall be settled in another way*. Either by the voice of the General Convention where all sit, and where alone doctrines can be touched,

(and this is the peaceful mode); or by the tribunals of the Church, properly constituted to hear complaints, lawfully preferred, of perversion of doctrine. This is *our ultimus arbiter rerum*; we have no pope.

But to this the Bishop will reply that he has a *special gift* of the Holy Ghost for the office of a Bishop in the Church of God. Far be it from me, my friend, to undervalue the sacred office of a Bishop, or treat it otherwise than with respectful reverence. I believe that he who is rightly set apart to it, does receive the gift of the Holy Ghost for the proper performance of his holy and peculiar functions. I believe that it is on that account his acts are valid and authoritative, and convey spiritual powers and benefits, when exercised within the limits of his appropriate functions. But what then? Is *infallibility*, either of judgment or act, necessarily within those limits? The Bishop himself has said it is not. Of himself he has written, "he may have misjudged." But if he alone may decide what is doctrine, and if his clergy and laity may not even entertain and express an opinion opposed to his view, can such a claim be sustained on any ground short of infallibility? I think not.

Beside; *for what* is the Holy Ghost thus given? It is for a particular purpose: it is *for the office of a Bishop*. Now no one will pretend, against the experience of all history, that a bishop may not become heterodox; and equally plain is it that to teach heresy is no part of a bishop's office. What must follow? Why this of course, that the moment he teaches heresy, *quoad hoc*, he has not the Holy Ghost any more than another man. When, therefore, the very ques-

tion at issue becomes whether the doctrine he teaches is true or heretical, he cannot *assume* that because he is a bishop, it is *necessarily* the former; and sheltering himself under the special gift of the blessed Spirit, say to those who differ from him that he *must* be right, and that in thinking otherwise than as he does, they sin against God, and *must* be wrong in their opinion, because his special gift authorizes *him alone* to determine the question at issue. The result of this argument is, that because he is a bishop, he alone must determine doctrine; and because he has a special gift of the Holy Ghost, even though he should act in opposition it, he cannot determine wrong.

But further, the Bishop seems to think that such must be the case, because, as he says, *he alone is responsible*; and he propounds as a maxim of the Church, that "she gives no authority where she exacts no responsibility," and that consequently, as she exacts no responsibility from the laity touching doctrine, discipline, and worship, she "precludes the judgment of the laity from all questions involving these things."

Now here it seems to me are several errors.

1. The Church has no such *maxim* that I ever met with, as that she gives no authority where she exacts no responsibility. It may be a very reasonable rule; but it strikes me that her rule is to put responsibility, not authority, in the first place, and then to say she holds us to *that* according to our means, whether they be ten talents, or five, or one. She has nowhere, that I know of, made the extent of responsibility the measure of authority; but she has made the extent of our means the measure of our responsibility.

But, 2. Suppose the rule were a maxim of the Church, as the Bishop states, then clearly the inferior clergy and laity would, both, have the power in Convention, which the Bishop denies to them; for we have seen that the Church has laid on them sometimes the *responsibility* of judging whether a bishop be sound in the faith, and the more painful duty of presenting him to his brother bishops for trial, if, in their judgment, he be not. And again, we have seen that by the canon of North Carolina, the laity alone, as a vestry, have the *responsibility* sometimes laid on them of presenting for trial, their doctrinally erroneous clergyman. The Church, therefore, on the Bishop's own ground, does not preclude the judgment of the laity from all questions involving doctrine, discipline, and worship.

3. The Bishop is not *alone responsible* in the sense that I suppose he *must* mean to give weight to his position. I am not sure that I rightly comprehend *how far* he extends his *sole* responsibility. For some things connected with the discharge of ministerial duty in North Carolina, he is alone responsible; for others he is not. Let us ask to *whom* and for *what*, he is responsible?

1. He is responsible to *God* for faithfully teaching, himself, the truth of Christ, and for using his authority, according to the law of "*this church*," to prevent any of his clergy from teaching, as Christ's truth, that which is not so.

2. He is responsible to his *fellow-men* of *all* orders in the Church, for faithfully holding and teaching in his own person; and for the lawful use of his proper canonical authority to enforce the teaching by the clergy under his

jurisdiction, of the truth of the Gospel, "*as this church hath received the same.*"

For these things he has a sole responsibility. But he certainly has no sole responsibility for the individual belief of every Churchman in North Carolina; all he can do is to preach the truth himself, and see that others under him preach it: and having faithfully done that, he will not be condemned for each one of his hearers who may refuse to receive it. This is his own teaching. In his sermon on "self-examination," he very truly says of every minister of Christ: "If his message be unheeded, the responsibility rests with the disobedient. Whatever may be the final and eternal result, the priest has delivered his own soul." (p. 115, of the "Obedience of Faith.")

But the Bishop speaks of his sole responsibility as if he were actually punishable for any want of orthodoxy in each individual of his diocese. On no other principle can he possibly claim, with any show of reason, the exclusive right to settle for the diocese what is orthodox. But he has no such right; for not he but the voice of the whole Church, expressed in a prescribed mode, is the sole standard of orthodoxy in all our dioceses. And as he makes his authority rest on his supposed responsibility, will it not follow that if his responsibility be *not* what he supposes, then the authority deduced from it is equally without foundation?

But there has been another exercise of authority on the part of the Bishop, in which he has (though I doubt not undesignedly) violated a fundamental principle of our ecclesiastical polity, and given a hard blow to the rights of our

respective diocesans within their jurisdictions. I allude to the formation of the order of "The Holy Cross," at Valle Crucis. If ecclesiastical history may be believed, monachism, amid some good, attributable less to the institution than to the circumstances of the times, has also done very much of evil. And Episcopalian, as I most conscientiously am, not the least of those evils to my mind has seemed to be its tendency, as manifested in many instances, to place ecclesiastics under the sole control of some prior of a monastery, or general of an order, with an express exemption of them from the jurisdiction of any bishop. Now, as I think every clergyman should be under Episcopal supervision and authority, I like not any thing that has the least tendency to break in on what I deem the ancient and Apostolic order and usage in this respect. Hence monachism is not viewed by me with favor; and it certainly has not been directed or sanctioned by the Church.

To the formation, therefore, of any religious order within our communion, bound by vows of poverty, celibacy, obedience, &c., to a superior, there are very serious objections. Let me give you a *fact* as related to me. I believe it to be true. A young gentleman was ordained a deacon in the diocese of —, where he was a candidate, and where he belonged. He was at the time of his ordination, though the fact was not then known, a member of the order of the "Holy Cross:" he had expressly, or impliedly, bound himself to some sort of obedience to the superior, as the facts I am about to relate will show. Soon after his ordination, and before he had canonically been removed from the diocese

by letter dimissory,—nay, as far as my informant knew, before he had asked a letter dimissory from his own diocesan, he received a letter from him, calling his attention to a vacant parish within his own diocese, and requesting of him to go to it, take the charge of it, and bestow on it his ministrations. To this letter from his own diocesan, the deacon answered that he could not comply with the request *until he had consulted the Bishop of North Carolina*. The bishop to whose diocese the deacon belonged was, as you may well suppose, somewhat perplexed to understand what mysterious connection had thus linked one of *his* deacons to a brother bishop; and the inquiry to which the circumstances led was among the first of those events which brought to the knowledge of the Church the existence of an order within it, bound by some kind of obligation, if not by express vows of obedience, to another superior than the one recognized in the ordination office.

I observe that in page 68 of his Pastoral, the Bishop states that certain young gentlemen offered him their services, and begged to come under his Episcopal guidance, “so soon as arrangements could be made for their transfer to my [his] diocese.” But I must infer from what follows that they then and there, without waiting for the transfer, became members of the order of the “Holy Cross.” Indeed one of the young gentlemen, I am credibly informed, was the very deacon just referred to.

But suppose all had been duly transferred before joining the order; let us then state one or two hypothetical cases, and see what is to become of the important principle of the

proper ecclesiastical subordination of our clergy to their respective bishops.

1. Suppose one of the order to be canonically transferred, by letter dimissory, from North Carolina to some other diocese; and suppose further, that he does not choose to dissolve his connection with the order. What spirit of obedience does he carry into his new diocese? The Church law, on the one hand, requires of him, and his ordination promises bind him, to reverently obey his bishop, who, according to the canons of the Church, may have the charge and government over him; with a glad mind and will to follow his *godly* admonitions: while, on the other hand, his obligations to his order (obligations, by the way, to which all experience shows additions by little and little, will constantly be made) may require of him to teach "sacerdotal absolution," for instance, in a sense directly opposed to his own bishop's "godly admonitions." Here, then, is at once a divided allegiance. He must disobey his bishop, or disregard his vow to the superior of his order. What an endless source of trouble to our bishops in their respective dioceses might not a body of men thus committed easily create; and under such circumstances, if, as your bishop supposes, each diocesan is solely and personally responsible for the orthodoxy of every Churchman in his diocese, I can only say, may Heaven have mercy on our poor bishops' souls! Their lot, already no easy one, will thus become, beyond all dispute, by far the hardest in the Christian Church.

2. But again: suppose the superior dies, the fraternity

either dies with him, or elects a new superior. The first is not likely to happen, for, to minds of a peculiar temperament, there is a sort of fascination in monastic usages. If, then, they elect a new superior, he must be either a bishop or a priest. If the first, suppose their own diocesan should refuse to have any thing to do with the order, as, if wise, I think he would ; are they to elect the bishop of some other diocese, who may sympathize with them, and thus set up a rival authority to the very Episcopate to which they owe allegiance and obedience ? Or, if they do not this, are they to elect, as a head, a mere *presbyter* ? Worse still ! They are subverting the fixed principles of the Church on the subject of subordination in the ministry. No *presbyter* can rightfully have among us such a power to control his brother *presbyter*. He cannot be a lawfully recognized *quasi* bishop. No bishop can be thus pushed from his chair by a *presbyter*, without a gross violation of all ecclesiastical principle.

These may suffice to show you how the peace of the whole Church may be disturbed by the practical working out of mediæval fancies for monastic life, and its obligations. Therefore it is that, on the slightest approach to monachism among us, I would respectfully utter my feeble warning, and say to all Churchmen, *Obsta principiis*.

I have now, my dear friend, gone through what I proposed. Neither time nor space have allowed me to do much more than suggest hints to guide your own thoughts. The unhappy abandonment of the Church by some who have recently gone to Rome (unhappy for themselves I

mean) has, however, led me to think that perhaps that all-wise Being, whose high prerogative alone it is, to bring good out of evil, means to overrule events to the accomplishment of a very great good. You know that unhappy differences of opinion on points which, however important, may be considered as of minor moment, when compared with the great doctrinal features that divide us from Rome, have, alas! too much of late alienated brethren who once understood and loved each other. Now I am perfectly satisfied that the great mass of our communion, clerical and lay, have no sympathy with the abominations and corruptions of Rome; we are *Protestant* Episcopalians. May it not be, then, that when the evil of indulging Romish sympathies, or idly coquetting with Romish usages, is brought home to us, in its *practical* effects, as illustrated by open apostasy; or, what is still more base, by the lurking treason that lingers among us, only to inflict at last a deeper injury, by sowing silently the seeds of disaffection; may it not be, I say, 1st, that God would rebuke and humble us for our pride, and punish us for our dissensions; and 2d, that, mingling benevolence even with his chastisement, He would show us that there is a *common ground* on which (each one forgetting his minor points of difference) we may once more stand, shoulder to shoulder, as brethren, with a common hope, a common heart, and a common resolution, to uphold the faith received from our martyred fathers of the Reformation; to proclaim ourselves, with one voice, the uncompromising, the irreconcilable enemies of all and each of Rome's corruptions?

Ah, my dear friend, such a result as this would cause

the Church to stand forth in her beauty and her strength, "terrible as an army with banners." Traitors would not long dare to linger among us.*

I profess to be no prophet, but there are those among the wise and good who think that, in the signs of the times, they see the gathering tokens of one more contest for "the truth as it is in Jesus," against the accumulated mass of falsehood, blasphemy, lust and idolatry of the Church of Rome. The field of battle they apprehend is to be our own fair land. If they be right, I confess I would fain see our own dear Church foremost in the van when the battle comes. Rome curses no "heretics" with more cordial anathemas than she does the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States. Rome knows that if that Church be true to her principles, Popery has no more dangerous enemy. It may *now* suit her purposes to deck her face in smiles, and lavish her blandishments, and spread her allurements before our young, our imaginative, our weak, who are captivated by the "poetry of religion." She has too her sympathizing tone of condolence for the querimonious breathings of the self-tormented victim who is writhing under the agony of wounded pride, or groaning over the broken bubble of disappointed ambition. She may kiss our traitors,

* How forcibly does an old, strong-minded clergyman of the English Church describe these traitors: "He that propagates suspected doctrines, such as praying for the dead, auricular confession, and the like, whose sole tendency is the gain and power of the priest, what is he but a *κἀπηλος*, a *negotiator* for his partisans abroad? What does he but sow the seeds of Popery in the very soil of the Reformation."—DR. BENTLEY'S WORKS, vol. iii. p. 261.

but she trusts them not. But under all this hypocrisy, there is no love for us. I would then fain see the soldiers of our little army inspecting their armor; perchance they will need it ere long; I would fain see them, when they put it on, acquit themselves like men; and when the time shall come, God grant that, in the name of CHRIST, they may deal blows of death to Romish superstition and error; for sure I am, they will strike for God, for TRUTH, for CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

Rev. 5/19 3. WRW

AN EXAMINATION

OF

THE DOCTRINE DECLARED AND THE POWERS CLAIMED

BY THE

Right Reverend Bishop Ives,

IN

A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY
OF HIS DIOCESE.

BY A LAY MEMBER

OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTH CAROLINA.

“We ought to give more credit to one private Layman than to the whole Council and to the Pope, if he bring better authority and more reason.”—Panormitanus, quoted with approbation by JEWELL.

Philadelphia:

H. HOOKER, S. W. CORNER OF EIGHTH AND CHESTNUT STS.

1849.

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1849, by
HERMAN HOOKER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court
of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

“It is evident that God hath not excluded the lay people that believeth in him, from the understanding of his holy secrets.”

JEWELL.

“Ignorance is” not “the mother of true devotion.”

“The Judges or Doctors of the Church, as being men, are often deceived.”—ST. AUGUSTINE, quoted by JEWELL.

AN EXAMINATION OF

BISHOP IVES' PASTORAL LETTER.

THE Right Rev. L. Silliman Ives, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina, has just issued* to the Clergy and Laity of his diocese, a Pastoral Letter, which seems destined to fill, amongst Protestant Episcopal Pastorals, a place of singular pre-eminence, though by no means of enviable distinction. It is, indeed, a very remarkable production, containing much to sadden the heart of every true son of the church, and not a little to stir up a feeling within the diocese of just indignation. It demands a full and thorough examination, and should receive from some member of the church in North Carolina a particular and effectual exposure.

If the Protestant Episcopal Church be, as its enemies have often said, but a disguised form of Romanism—if our Bishop be alone responsible for the doc-

* The pastoral, though dated 8th August, did not reach Raleigh till Sept. 29th.

trine, discipline, and worship of his diocese, and therefore should have sole authority over what he is alone responsible for; if he have, as a consequence of this authority and responsibility, a right to require from his diocese implicit submission to any doctrine he may think proper to teach; a right to introduce amongst us ceremonies and practices not only unknown here, not only unknown throughout the church in the United States, but “wholly unauthorized by the customs of the church as established by the English reformation;” if the clergy and laity assembled in diocesan convention have nothing to do with the doctrines thus taught, and the practices thus introduced,—can institute no inquiry, and express no opinion respecting them; if he may set forth at one time teachings different from and opposed to the teachings set forth by him at another, and the members of the church must follow all his fluctuations of doctrine even as the obedient vane follows the shiftings of the wind; if, in one word, our Bishop be within his diocese a spiritual lord and master over God’s heritage, and have papal supremacy over us, then it is high time that our actual state and condition should be known; and if these things be not so, then is it high time that the church at large should be disabused, and we vindicated from the suspicion of admitting such exorbitant claims, and bowing down in such degrading submission.

I propose, then, to examine a most important doctrinal position assumed by the Bishop, to consider the claim put forth by him to supreme authority in his di-

ocese, and to ascertain, by a somewhat particular investigation, whether his doctrine, or his claim of authority can be supported by the teaching or practice of the reformed church of England, or of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States. I shall, also, notice other matters in the pastoral, so far as justice to the late Salisbury convention, and to the diocese, may seem to require.

In order accurately to understand the Bishop's doctrinal position, we must go back to a former pastoral letter, entitled "The Priestly Office," and addressed to "the clergy," as the present is to "the clergy and laity" of the diocese.

In that pastoral, page 12, he says, "But sins may be committed after baptism—committed *against the vows of the holy covenant* made to God as represented by his ministers. Hence, they were entrusted with power to remit, upon true repentance, such sins, and restore the offenders to the forfeited blessings of their baptismal state." Again, (at page 16,) it is "as true now, as ever, that man sinning *mortally*, or so as to *hazard his spiritual life* after baptism, stands *in need of absolution* from that priesthood to whom Christ said, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.' And if these blessings could not be reached in the days of the apostles except through the priesthood, how can they now?" And again, (at page 24,) "For then, and not till then, will they (the people) discover the depth of their guilt as unfaithful members of Christ's body—discover how helpless and

hopeless is their condition as neglecters of the grace of baptism, and violators of baptismal vows, without the extraordinary mercy which God has provided for them through 'the ministry of reconciliation,'—perceive the dreadful hazard of that *presumption* which leads such neglecters and violators to trust for pardon to a *vague and general repentance*, a REPENTANCE NOT ACCEPTED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST, who ALONE have charge of the discipline of his church, or THE POWER TO REMIT OR RETAIN SINS."

In the present pastoral, (page 25,) the Bishop, referring to the former, thus states its teaching, "This is the doctrine,—the *necessity of priestly absolution*, where it may be had, to cancel or remit all sin after baptism which destroys the life of God in the soul, and separates it from the grace of the covenant,—which, (it is said,) has called up around your Bishop so many pale faces and fainting hearts. But it is the one on which he stands without fear, and will stand, by the help of God," &c. Again, at page 51, he says, "Absolution not only confers grace, but exacts *conditions*, and implies more or less *priestly judgment*. The conditions are comprised in one single term, *repentance*: one part of which, however, as we have seen, is *confession*. To ensure the effect of *absolution*, this confession must embrace, (1.) *Sin that separates the soul from Christ*." Again, "Our confession must have in it, (2.) both the *number* and right conception of our sins, in order to bring the *soul into a state of remission*." On the next page, speaking of baptized

persons who have grown up unmindful of their vows, &c., he says, "Would they be able, under such circumstances, to *take their weight*, ONE BY ONE—examine the *catalogue* of their sins *severally*. BUT, THIS MUST BE DONE." And again, at page 49, "Besides, the form in the English book in the 'order for the visitation of the sick,' shows conclusively what the mind of our branch of the church is on the *effect* of priestly absolution. The form is as follows: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by *His* authority, *committed to me*, I ABSOLVE thee from *all thy* sins, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.'

"Now what can show more strongly than this that the church believes, and hence that we, as her faithful children, believe that the priests *when* they pronounce *these words* over the truly penitent, do convey, *really and directly*, God's pardon *to their consciences* for all their sins and offences committed against Him?"

Now, putting these passages together, it evidently appears that, according to the Bishop's views, in order to the remission of certain sins committed after baptism, *priestly absolution*, if it may be had, is *necessary*, and these sins are described by him, at one time, as sins "*committed against the vows of the baptismal covenant*;" again, as those "*which hazard the spiritual life*;" again, as those which "*destroy the life of God in the soul*, and *separate* it from the grace of

the covenant," and, finally, as mortal sins, "sinning mortally," being his exact phrase. Again, it is evident that, according to his views, in order to ensure the effect of priestly absolution, a particular confession must be made of all such sins. In the next place, it seems clear that the Bishop refers to some other absolution than that pronounced in the public service of the church, and to some other confession than the public general one there made, or the private particular confession to God alone, recommended and enjoined by the church; for, although he says, (page 51,) "'While, therefore, *private confession* is not regarded by our branch of the one Catholic church,' as generally necessary to salvation, and, hence, as in the primitive church, is left to the *voluntary* action of individuals under *contrition* moving them thereto; yet as priestly *absolution* from all deadly sin,* after baptism, is *regarded necessary*, it becomes a question for each one to determine how far the effects of such absolution may or may not depend upon this kind of confes-

* It may be proper to say that deadly or mortal sins, according to Romish writers, are these seven—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. (See Ursuline Manual, p. 52.) From a consideration of this list, it may appear that, "sinning mortally" after baptism is by no means a rare occurrence, and some notion may be formed how often, how very often, baptized persons stand in need of *priestly absolution* as contradistinguished from the *forgiveness* which, *for venial sins*, may be had upon prayer to God without recourse to a priest, unless, indeed, these venial sins are not to be forgiven, but reserved for cleansing in the fire of purgatory!!

sion. What the church has not enjoined as necessary, may become so, however, by the moral state of individuals. What is not imposed as a condition, may be, in certain cases, required as a means." Yet he says, on the same page, "*Absolution* not only confers grace, but exacts *conditions*, and implies, more or less, *priestly judgment*. The conditions are comprised in the single term—repentance; one part of which, however, as we have seen, is—confession. To ensure the effect of absolution, this confession must embrace sin that separates the soul from communion with Christ. St. Chrysostom, as quoted with approbation by Hooker, says, '*To call ourselves sinners availeth nothing*, except as we lay our faults in the balance and *take the weight of them ONE BY ONE*. (2.) Again, our confession must have in it both the *number* and right conception of our sins, in order to bring the soul into a state of remission.' And afterwards, (52,) "Further *absolution* looks to the *cure of sin* as well as its *remission*." Again, he (Hooker,) says, "The knowledge how to handle our sins is no vulgar and common art, and the reason he gives is, that we are prone to be *partial and over-tender with ourselves*, and, besides, that we often fall into 'timorous scrupulosities, and so into extreme discomforts of mind;' hence, that earnest men in the primitive church thought it "the *safest way to disclose their secret faults*, and crave imposition of *penance* from them whom our *Lord Jesus Christ* hath left in his church to be *spiritual and ghostly physicians*,

the *guides* and *pastors of redeemed souls*, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in the *private particular cure of diseased souls!* But how can this benefit be secured in the present state of confession? How can the physician prescribe in wisdom and *honesty* without knowing the disease?"

Now if this priestly absolution implies "priestly judgment," it cannot be the public absolution of the church which is meant, for that is directed to be given upon a public confession in prescribed terms, and nothing is left to the judgment of the priest, and hence a private absolution must be intended. And if a confession of "all sins that separate the soul from communion with Christ," "laying our faults in the balance, and taking the weight of them ONE BY ONE," and "having in it both the *number* and right conception of sins," be necessary to ensure the benefit of such absolution; if the priest is to exercise his *judgment* upon this repentance, and if this judgment cannot be exercised "in the *present state of confession*;" if men's "secret faults" must be disclosed to the priest in order that he may exercise his functions "in the *private particular cure* of diseased souls;" if he cannot "in honesty prescribe, as a spiritual physician, without knowing the disease, and if the disease *consists* of "all mortal sins;" if it is "presumption for neglecters of the grace of baptism, and violators of baptismal vows to trust for pardon to a repentance not accepted by the representatives of Christ;" and if the repentance to be ac-

cepted includes as one part of it a particular confession of all mortal sins; doth it not evidently follow that, according to the Bishop's teaching, private absolution by a priest, to be given upon a particular confession, made to him of all mortal sins is necessary to the remission thereof?

Now, according to this doctrine, what has become of the thousands of Christians of our communion who have been committed to the grave, as we humbly thought, in the hope of a joyful resurrection? How many of them were baptized in infancy, and for a long time were "violators of their baptismal vows," or had fallen into mortal sins after baptism, and, upon being awakened to a sense of their sinfulness, had trusted to a "repentance not accepted" by a priest for pardon? Or rather, of all those, what one had submitted his repentance to a priest, or sought his aid in the "private, particular cure of his diseased soul,"—what one of them had disclosed all his secret faults to his spiritual physician, in order that by priestly judgment his repentance might be accepted, and priestly absolution be obtained? Had one, of them all, done this? Is it, then, "presumption" to hope that their sins were remitted, and must we conclude that their souls are lost? But it may still be said upon certain passages in the Bishop's present pastoral, one of which I have quoted, that the Bishop does not *intend* to assert as doctrine what so evidently follows from the passages I have quoted—that although he *seems* so to teach—although his positions *necessarily* lead, by just reason-

ing, to such a conclusion—yet that he did not mean it. I admit that the several parts of the Bishop's teaching do not stand well together—that his doctrine, though spread over many pages, is no where fully and precisely stated. But beyond the possibility of doubt, denial or mistake, he has taught and intended to teach this—that priestly absolution, when it may be had, is necessary to the remission of mortal sin—that to the effect of such absolution, a particular confession of all mortal sins, *one by one* numbering and weighing them, is a necessary condition—and that the church *advises and recommends in some cases* such confession of *all mortal sins* to be made *unto a priest*, either as a necessary means to bring the soul into “a state of remission,” or else as a useful and valuable aid to such result.

Either, then, the Bishop's doctrine is,—

1. That private particular confession of mortal sins to a priest, with priestly absolution thereupon, where it may be had, is necessary to the remission of such sins.

Or else—

2. That priestly absolution, where it may be had, is necessary—that as the condition on which such absolution may have effect, a particular confession of all *mortal sins* is necessary, and that, either as a necessary means, or a useful and valuable aid, such confession of *all mortal sins* ought, *in some cases*, to be made to a priest.

Now I shall undertake to show that the Bishop's doctrine, taken either way, is not the doctrine of the

Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, or of the Reformed Church of England. Although I shall address the proof directly and chiefly to the first statement of the Bishop's doctrine—the necessity of priestly absolution upon a particular private confession to the priest, in order to obtain remission of sins, which I take to be, and think I have shown is, the doctrine he teaches; yet, I hope to show clearly, also, that the other statement of it is equally without support—that neither church any where *directs or recommends, on any occasion*, a particular confession to be made of *all mortal sins* to a priest, either as a necessary means, or a useful and valuable assistance to obtaining remission, or *for any other purpose*, and that neither church holds that priestly absolution is *ever necessary* to the remission of sins.

I. The Bishop's doctrine is not the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

If it be her doctrine, it must be found in her Prayer Book, or Articles, or in some book or books referred to by her as containing a statement of her doctrine.

But it is not found in either.

She no where *commands, or requires, or directs, confession of sins* to be made *to a priest*. She calls upon her children in her morning and evening prayers, and at the communion, to confess, but it is to confess *unto God*, and she provides forms of confession, which, so far from being made *to the priest*, or to God “through the priest,” are made by the priest and people *together*, as sinners all needing and suing for forgive-

ness to God; the *people* no more confessing to God through *him* than *he* through *them*. This confession is conceived in the most general terms, without any specification of any particular sin whatever, and yet evidently designed to include "mortal sins," for it concludes with the acknowledgment that "there is no health in us;" and she, then, by the same confession, instructs and leads us *at once* to approach God with supplication for pardon.

And yet the church, in the preceding Exhortation, teaches that this public occasion is not one on which there is less necessity for confessing our sins, than on all or some other occasions, but that this is the very occasion on which confession is demanded above others. For in that exhortation, after declaring that "we ought, *at all times*, humbly to acknowledge our sins before God," she adds, "yet ought *we chiefly so to do* when we assemble and meet together" for the purposes for which we are then assembled. And upon this general confession unto God, the church authorizes and directs to be used the only forms of absolution which her services any where contain or recognise. If, then, in the judgment of the church, on that occasion which *chiefly*, and by way of pre-eminence requires us to confess our sins "with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same," a general confession to Almighty God *with*, and not *to* or *through*, the priest, is all which she requires; if, upon such confession, she authorizes her absolution to be declared, that thereby

we may obtain, or be assured that we obtain, or have obtained, the end of that confession, to wit, forgiveness of our sins, it follows that we cannot, upon any occasion of confession less than this chief one, be required by her to make a *particular* confession *to the priest* or *indirectly* to God *through him*, as necessary to the remission of our sins. For the end of confession, as she teaches, is to obtain forgiveness; this end may be obtained upon a general confession or it may not. If it may not, then the whole confession and absolution are an impious mockery of God, and a cruel delusion of her children; if it may, then the end of confession being obtainable, and by the truly penitent and believing obtained, on this *chief* occasion of confession, it is absurd to suppose a particular confession to a priest necessary, on any other occasion, to obtain such remission. In the Catechism, the question is asked, "What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?" And the answer is, "That they examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins," &c.,—not that they submit their repentance to the examination of a priest. This is the authoritative teaching by the church of what is required from communicants, as to the examination to be made whether they truly repent of their sins. Here, if the church deemed confession to a priest necessary, she would have laid it down as "doctrine;" but she lays down no such thing. She says nothing about a priest, or a confession to a priest, because she thought neither necessary; she says nothing about classes of

sins; for, in regard to this matter, what she thought of one class, she thought of all. She required examination of himself to be made *by the communicant*, as to all his sins; because she deemed this all that the necessity of the case required. In her first exhortation in the communion office, she repeats the same doctrine, saying, "Search and examine *your own* consciences," &c., and then informs us how this should be done—"The way and means thereto is, first, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever you shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by *will, word* or *deed*, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment" &c.; here, again, not one word is said as to the necessity of priestly intervention,—the exercise of "priestly judgment" to pass upon our repentance; *we* are to conduct the examination by the "rule of God's commandments," and whereinsoever *we* shall discover that we have offended by *will, word* or *deed*, are to confess ourselves directly to God, and not *to* a priest, or *through* a priest. These are the directions given by the church for carrying into *practice* the "doctrine" laid down in the Catechism. These explain by the action required, what was the doctrine taught—these are the church's own commentary on her own doctrine, and here, as in the Catechism, she is utterly silent as to any priestly offices whatever.

In the conclusion of this exhortation occurs the only

reference to the interposition of a "minister" in this preparation. It is in these words: "And because it is requisite that no man should come to the holy communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel; let him come to me, or to some other minister of God's word, and open his grief; that he may receive such godly counsel and advice, as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness."

Now, the first observation which occurs on this most wise and suitable counsel is, that it contains no recommendation or advice that a particular "confession of all mortal sins, one by one," should be made to the minister, and implies no such recommendation. It supposes a person, after using the means before pointed out by the church, to be "unable to quiet his own conscience," and therefore requiring "further comfort or counsel," and *such an one* is invited to come to a minister and "open his grief," not to make "a confession of all," nor so far as appears, of any "of his *mortal* sins," but to *open his grief*—to explain the particular difficulty or difficulties which prevent him from obtaining a quiet conscience. Now this difficulty may or may not arise from a mortal sin; but whatever it may be, this *only* is to be *opened* to the minister, for the end of coming to him at all is to obtain *a quiet conscience* by his assistance; if it can

be obtained without such assistance, the church does not recommend the communicant to come at all; and, as—in the case supposed by the church, his “grief” being comforted, and his “scruples” removed by the assistance of the minister, all is done which the church designed—further confession would plainly be beside the purpose in view, and is, therefore, not *implied*, as it is not expressed by her language.

The next observation to be made upon this concluding part of the exhortation is, that the church neither speaks of, nor alludes to “*absolution*” to be obtained from the minister. “Godly counsel and advice,” and not absolution, is what she requires the troubled sinner to ask, and the minister to give. She neither *directs, recommends, nor allows* the minister to give “absolution.”

The Bishop, in his present pastoral, at page 49, has this passage:—“Besides, the form in the *English* book in ‘the order for the visitation of the sick,’ shows conclusively what the mind of *our branch of the church* is on the effect of priestly absolution.”

Now, without stopping to inquire whether that form in the English office shows the mind of the *English* church to accord with the Bishop’s as to the effect of priestly absolution, it is plain it cannot show at all the mind of “our branch of the church,”—the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States. For what sort of an argument is this? There is a passage in the English book which proves the mind of the American church when it is not in the American book—or rather

a passage *was* in the American book, and the American church *struck it out*, and yet the American church is shown thereby to have the same mind as if she had *kept it in*. How vainly, then, did our church revise the English liturgy—whether on that revision she deliberately struck out or retained any thing, is a matter of no importance, for, according to the Bishop, whatever is left in the English book, though put out of ours, remains always the conclusive exposition of the opinions of those who reject, as well as those who retain it. Why, is it not plain (if this be so,) that we are not an independent national church at all—that we have no power over doctrine or discipline, but, whether we will or not, must ever have, (virtually and in effect,) the English church to be, in both, our ruler and guide.

Let us try this reasoning of the Bishop by two other cases. The rubric, before the apostles' creed, in our prayer book, declares that any church may omit the words "he descended into hell." Will the Bishop cite the English book, which has no such rubric, to show "conclusively the mind of our branch of the church" that these words may *not be omitted*, but *must be said*? Again, the English prayer book contains a creed called "the Creed of Saint Athanasius," which, by a rubric, is directed to be said on Christmas and certain other days, both creed and rubric have been, by our church, stricken out; now, will the Bishop cite that rubric from the English book to show the "mind of our branch of the church," that a clergyman

must or may read that creed on Christmas next in a church in North Carolina? Our church *may* agree with the English as to the effect of priestly absolution, but it is certain that agreement cannot be shown by what is contained in their Prayer Book, and designedly struck out of ours.

The office for the Visitation of the Sick set forth by our church, contains no direction or recommendation of any kind for confession of sins to the priest, or for absolution by him, and the only office in which such confession is directed at all, is that for the Visitation of Prisoners. In this office, for a prisoner under sentence of death, is a rubric which directs that the minister shall "examine whether he repent him truly of his sins, exhorting him to a *particular confession* of the sin for which he is *condemned*." And, "after his confession," is to disclose to him "the pardoning mercy of God in the form which is used in the communion office." On this several remarks naturally present themselves. First, that the church by exhorting to a *particular confession* of one sin *only*, excludes the idea of recommending a particular confession of *all* sins, or all mortal sins. Second, that when the church directs the minister to "examine" whether a person "repents him truly of his sins," she means not thereby a confession to be made of those sins to the minister, for this examination she directs in the above quoted rubric, and therein exhorts the prisoner to a particular confession of *one* sin, which would be absurd if the examination implied a confession of all his sins. Third,

that the church speaks not of "absolution to be pronounced," but "the pardoning mercy of God to be declared" in a certain form, which after asserting that God has promised to forgive all true penitents, concludes with a prayer that he may have mercy upon and pardon the person or persons to whom the declaration is made. Now, to me, it is evident that the church does not design this as an absolution; because the words used do not, *of themselves*, impart "an absolution," and the sense in which the church uses them must be determined by something else than the form itself,—because the church does not here style the form "an absolution," or "a declaration of *absolution*;" because the church had at her revision of the English prayer book carefully stricken out of the exhortation in the communion office, and in the visitation office of the sick, all reference to absolution, and she cannot, therefore, be supposed, from an equivocal act, to intend to insert here what she then struck out; because as the prayer book stood until within a few years, the word in the rubric was "minister" and not "priest," the latter word having been recently introduced, without, so far as I am able to find, any lawful authority of the church;—and because, finally, of the opinion of Bishop White as to the meaning and effect of this very form. His words are, (I quote from the notes of Bishop Brownell's prayer book,) "the correct doctrine, as apparent to me, is, that the truth of the form applies *at any time*, and *by whomsoever said*, the proper conditions being found: and

that the *only* difference between its being declared by a proper minister, or by another person, is, that the former is acting under commission; a circumstance *most likely to wing what he says with comfort.*”

If, in this view, I am correct, there is no place or passage in the prayer book which teaches private absolution to be necessary, or recommends such absolution as *advisable*, or declares or implies it to be *allowable*—and so the Bishop’s position has no support from the prayer book. If, on the contrary, I am incorrect in this view, the consequence is fatal to the Bishop’s position as being held by our branch of the church. For then the church, in the office for the visitation of prisoners, intends “a priestly absolution” to be pronounced to a condemned malefactor of *all his sins*, whilst yet he is supposed by her to have made a particular confession of one only. The Bishop’s doctrine is, that to the effect of priestly absolution, a particular confession of *all* mortal sins is necessary—which doctrine the church holds not, if in this form she intends a priestly absolution—for the words of the form are “pardon and deliver you from *all* your sins,” and yet the church exhorts only to the *confession of one*, so that, upon the supposition of a priestly absolution being here intended, the church holds that mortal sin may be remitted by a priestly absolution without a confession thereof, and the only exception here made is of mortal sin, for which judgment of death has been given, and, therefore, he who hath not received such judgment of death, according to the church, *need* not

confess to the priest *any mortal sin*. Therefore it follows that he who confesses his sins to God only, (not being under judgment of death,) may have pardon thereof through an absolution in a certain form pronounced by a priest,—and by necessary consequence, this same form being pronounced by a priest in the public service, upon a confession there made to God only, may convey like pardon, unless it shall be held that the virtue of a form used by a priest is less in a *church* than in a *prison*, but this no Christian will dare to maintain.

The Bishop seems to be rather at a loss to produce any evidence from our own Liturgy and Articles to support his doctrine, and, therefore, generally refers to what is in the English book, and is not in ours; on this mode of proof I have already remarked. But he alleges certain passages from the works of the late Bishop Ravenscroft, whom he well calls “lamented,” and “noble prelate;” for a noble prelate he was, and lamented he is, and always will be by all who knew him. But do the passages cited from Bishop Ravenscroft teach the doctrine advanced by Bishop Ives? Most certainly not. Bishop Ives admits that his predecessor in those passages “did not make *priestly absolution* the *immediate* subject of either of the discourses” from which the quotations are taken. And where is the evidence that he *alluded* therein to that subject? There is none. He asserts, indeed, that one end of the gospel ministry (as Bishop Ives quotes him) is “the communication of the gospel to mankind

in order to recover them from the ruin and misery of sin," &c.; but does it therefore follow that confession must or may be made to a priest? He asserts that another purpose of that ministry is to "transact the conditions of that recovery, by receiving the submission of penitent sinners, and administering to such the *divinely appointed* pledges of *pardon*, and *adoption* into the family of God." What then? must confession be made of all mortal sins to a priest? Are confession and priestly absolution the *divinely appointed* pledges of *pardon* and *adoption*? Does not every body know that, according to the church, this *pardon* and *adoption* are sealed to us in baptism? Bishop Ravenscroft asserts that the ministry are "to watch over the household of faith, and to exercise the discipline of Christ;" but is it a fair conclusion from this to say priestly absolution is necessary to the remission of sin? True, Bishop Ravenscroft claims for the ministry the power of "the keys;" but what follows? that private confession to a priest and absolution thereupon is necessary to the remission of sins? Does *claiming* the *power* of the keys determine *the sense* in which this power is to be understood? What is the power of the keys? Hear what Jewell teaches in his "Apology," that noble confession of the doctrine of the Reformed Church of England. (Jewell's Works, Ox. ed., 1848. Vol. VIII., p. 289.) "And touching *the keys*, wherewith they may either shut or open the kingdom of Heaven, we, with Chrysostom say, they be the knowledge of the Scriptures; with Ter-

tullian we say, they be 'the interpretation of the law;' and with Eusebius we call them 'the word of God.' Moreover that Christ's disciples did receive this authority, not that they should *hear the private confessions of the people* and *listen to their whisperings*, as the common massing priests do every where now-a-days; and do it so as though in that one point lay all the virtue and use of the keys; but to the end they should go—they should teach—they should publish abroad the gospel, and be unto the believing a sweet savour of life unto life, and unto the unbelieving and unfaithful a savour of death unto death; and that the minds of godly persons being brought low by the remorse of their former life and errors, after they once began to look up unto the light of the gospel, and believe in Christ, might be opened *with the word of God*, even as a door is opened with a key:—contrariwise, that the wicked and wilful folk, and such as would not believe, nor return unto the right way, should be left still as fast locked and shut up, and as Saint Paul saith, 'wax worse and worse.' This take we to be the meaning of *the keys*; and that, *after this sort*, men's consciences be either opened or shut." Again, in his defence "of the Apology" against the papist, Harding, he says, (Works, Vol. VIII., p. 504,) "We confound not these keys. We say that the power as we'l of *loosing* as also of *binding*, standeth in God's word, and the *exercise*, or execution, of the same *either in preaching* or else *in sentence* of correction or ecclesiastical discipline."

Now here we find the power of the keys claimed by Jewell in the name of the Reformed Church of England; but no mention made of private confession and absolution as belonging thereto, but a denial thereof. Will the Bishop conclude from thence, that Jewell believed that priestly absolution, founded on private confession, is necessary to the remission of mortal sin? Will he so conclude? then let Jewell himself answer. Vol. VIII., p. 516. "We make no confusion of the keys. Our doctrine is plain; that there be *two keys* in the church of God; the one of *instruction*, the other of *correction*. Whereof the one worketh *inwardly*, the other *outwardly*; the one *before God*, the other *before the congregation*, and yet either of these standeth wholly in the word of God." Now here is no mistake, can be none, and it is evident that Jewell knew no such *third* key, which worketh in private confession and priestly absolution. Neither did Bishop Ravenscroft know any such, else he would have declared it to his people. If he had thought that priestly absolution was necessary to the remission of sins, or that a particular confession of all mortal sin to the priest was either necessary or advisable, he would have proclaimed it to his congregation in sermons—to his convention in Charges; on all he would have urged it with the truthful simplicity and earnest diligence which marked his whole ministerial life. It would not have been left to conjecture, but set forth plainly, for he was not a man who dealt in ambiguous phraseology; it would have been set forth always and

every where, for he taught every where, and always the same doctrine. But he never alluded in public service, or Charge, or in private instruction to his clergy or his laity, so far as is known, to any such doctrine. Nay more, after all hope of recovery was gone, he himself, for many weeks, awaited the coming of death; he was visited by the lay members of his church, male and female, by his clergy, and by his friends generally—he spoke to them (oh, how he spoke!) on the awful subjects of death and judgment, of sin, and repentance, and forgiveness. But spoke not at all of the necessity or propriety of having a priest “to accept our repentance”—to have us number and see us weigh our sins—to give us his priestly absolution. Then, if never before, he would have done this, had he believed the doctrine of Bishop Ives. Then, if never before, he would have warned his hearers against the “presumption” of trusting for pardon of mortal sin “to a repentance not accepted by” a priest, and a confession made to Almighty God alone.

The Bishop, on page 53, has this passage: “Bishop Ravenscroft, in discussing the relative duties of pastor and people, enjoins upon the latter, “*that they make their pastor,*” I use his words, “*acquainted with their spiritual condition,* and bitterly laments that in our system there is such a want of inclination and opportunity for this.” Bishop Ives gives no reference to the place in which the quoted words are found, but I find in a charge of Bishop Ravenscroft, (see Works, vol. 1, p. 461,) the passage from which

the extract is taken. It is in these words: "A third obligation, growing out of the pastoral relation, is, that the members of the church attend regularly on his ministrations; that they make him acquainted with their spiritual condition, and consult freely with him thereupon; that they hear with reverence, and judge with candour, his expositions of Christian doctrine, and his admonitions and exhortations to holiness of life; and that they practise diligently the duties and obligations of Christian profession." But now, does this passage show that the writer was speaking of, or referred to, or wished to encourage, under any circumstances, a particular confession of all mortal sins "one by one," by tale and weight, to a priest—or that he desired priestly absolution to be given by the pastor upon "being made acquainted with the spiritual condition" of any member of his congregation?

But the Bishop invokes the aid of the Rev. Mr. Curtis, whose removal to South Carolina the whole church of this diocese has great cause to lament. Certain passages are cited by the Bishop from an able sermon of Mr. Curtis upon the power of the keys. But do they afford the least support to the doctrine that *priestly absolution, upon private confession to a priest, is necessary to the remission of all mortal sins*—or that the particular confession of all such sins to a priest is either necessary or advisable? Most certainly not. Did Mr. Curtis in that discourse *intend* to teach any such doctrine? Certainly he did not, if he himself may be allowed to determine his

own meaning. For in his sermon, (page 13,) he quotes from Bingham, with commendation, as expressing his own views, the following passage—"The acts of the ministry, whereby the benefit of absolution is ordinarily dispensed unto men, are these four:—

1. The power of administering the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper to all such as are qualified to receive them; which is, therefore, called *sacramental absolution*.

2. The power of declaring or publishing the terms or conditions upon which the gospel promises pardon and remission of sins; which is called the *declaratory absolution* of the word and doctrine.

3. The power of interceding with God for pardon of sins through the merits of Christ; which is the absolution of prayer, or *precatory absolution*.

4. The power of executing church discipline and censures upon delinquents; which consists in *excluding flagitious and scandalous sinners from the communion of the church*, and receiving *penitents again* when they have given just evidence of a sincere repentance. This is called *judicial absolution*.

In these four acts, regularly exercised, *consists* the ministerial power of *retaining or remitting* sins."

Now, does this teach or imply that without *priestly absolution*, when it may be had, mortal sins cannot be remitted? Does this teach or imply that all mortal sins must, under some circumstances, be particularly confessed to a priest in order to obtain the virtue or effect of such priestly absolution?

In the sacrament of the Lord's supper, absolution, according to Mr. Curtis, is obtained, but without any such private confession and priestly absolution. So also the declaratory and precatory absolutions of the daily service are given upon a general confession to God only. Under which, then, of these four acts, in which, according to Mr. Curtis, "consists the ministerial power of retaining or remitting sins," will the Bishop include his private priestly absolution upon a private confession of mortal sins? Will he include it under the last? That refers to *scandalous* sinners *expelled from the church*, and upon just evidence of repentance *received again*. The Bishop, on the contrary, includes in his proposition *all baptized persons*, though in full external communion, who have committed mortal sins. Mr. Curtis refers to *open* and *notorious* sins which have made the sinner "scandalous," which have given public offence. The Bishop, on the contrary, demands confession of "secret faults," of those things "done in secret," of which St. Paul says "it is a shame to speak," thoughts of evil things indulged for a time, and then expelled by a returning sense of duty, intents of sins never carried into action, which died before they reached performance, the embryo conceptions of iniquity, the thousand inward ills which sin inflicts upon us, and which in our better moments we abhor and renounce, all these the Bishop desires should be drawn out from the dark oblivion to which the repentant and horror-stricken sinner had sought to consign them—these must be bid to live

again, and be again thought over by the shuddering mind—be laid before a priest—be examined with searching eye—be exactly numbered, and curiously weighed!!

This is the kind of confession which the Bishop's doctrine requires to be introduced—a confession which Mr. Curtis would, no doubt, shrink from making, and promptly decline to receive.

How admirably calculated is this re-enacting of secret faults, this putting into words the sins of thought, to restore purity to the penitent, and preserve it in the confessor! Truly, to such an end it is not more conducive, than are, to the promotion of enlightened and devout affections, some of the improvements in the form and magnificence of church buildings, and in the postures at public worship which the Bishop has seen, or desires to see accomplished; (p. 55, 58,) for example, the *direction* of kneeling, on which he lays great stress. At page 55, speaking of the time “when custom was in keeping with doctrine,” he says, “Then it was manifest that the minister offered prayer to God, and not to the *people*, by kneeling towards the place where the incarnate God had taken up His special abode.”

Now there is no man in this diocese, if there be any such in the world, who ever supposed for a moment that a prayer to Almighty God was addressed to the congregation, or that the minister, kneel in what direction he might, was asking pardon and blessing *for* the people *from* the people. But if any be so stupid

as to make this mistake, no direction of the minister's kneeling will help him, since none of us, until we saw the Pastoral, had heard that there was *any* place in our churches "in which the incarnate God had taken up his *special abode*," and none of us know now *where* that place is.

The Bishop seems to admit that, in appearance, the church is against him, because she requires repentance only from those who come to the Communion. But he says, (31,) "The error here lies, I think, in understanding repentance in a restricted popular sense, and not in the sense of the church," and he endeavours to show that under the term "repentance," the church includes contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Now, if by confession here the Bishop means confession unto Almighty God, it will not serve his purpose; for his doctrine requires a particular confession of mortal sins unto a priest in all cases, or at least in some cases, and this the church did not mean, as may be conclusively shown.

In baptism, the Bishop admits we receive full remission of all sins; for baptism, the church in her catechism demands repentance, but the Bishop himself admits that repentance, as a qualification for baptism, does not include a particular confession to a priest; but that we may, and do receive full remission in that sacrament without such confession. But the church requires "repentance" in those who are baptized, and the Bishop admits that confession to a priest is not required of them; and, therefore, the Bishop him-

self being judge, the church does not include, under the term *repentance*, confession to a priest. Now, surely, it is just reasoning to say, that the church having required, in her Catechism, repentance from those who came to be baptized, and afterwards, in the same Catechism, having required repentance from those who came to the Lord's Supper, must be understood to require, in the second instance, just what she required in the first, unless the church, in the Catechism or elsewhere, has otherwise determined. For it is a sound rule of interpretation that, in any exact treatise, the same term twice occurring, without any note or mark of difference, must be understood, in both places, in the same sense.

But the church is the best expositor of her own meaning, and she has herself conclusively determined it to be different from that which the Bishop would attribute to her.

In the exhortation before quoted she shows, in directing her children how they shall prepare for the Communion, what she meant by her doctrinal teaching in the Catechism, as to the qualifications for that sacrament. She directs us, first, to examine our lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever we shall perceive ourselves to have offended, either by will, word or deed, there to *bewail our own sinfulness*, and to confess ourselves to *Almighty God*, with full purpose of amendment of life; she then directs restitution and satisfaction, &c., to our neighbours whom we may have wronged, and for-

givenness of those who may have wronged us. He, then, according to the church, who has discovered his offences against God's commandments, and humbled himself, and confessed them before God with a full purpose of amendment, has truly repented within the church's meaning; unless we suppose, which cannot be, that in directing how we are to prepare for a worthy participation in the Communion, she has failed to require repentance at all. Hence, when she in the exhortation at the Communion says, "ye who truly repent," all must understand her to mean "in the manner mentioned in the exhortation read to you, when the minister gave notice of this Communion."

The Bishop seems to think himself fortified in his opinions, because "the church admits no one to the blessed sacrament without confession and absolution." The church, indeed, exhorts to private *self*-examination, and *particular* confession to *God*, and appoints a *general* confession to be said openly by priest and people, and a public declaration of absolution to the penitent and believing. But surely this gives no countenance to the opinion, that *private particular* confession to a *priest*, an acceptance of the penitent's repentance and private absolution, involving the exercise of priestly judgment, are necessary, *under any circumstances*, to the remission of mortal sin.

Now, is it not evident that the Bishop's doctrine is not only without countenance, from our branch of the church, but is in opposition to all which the church has taught? *He* declares a *necessity* for priestly ab-

solution to the remission of mortal sin, where it might be had; *she* teaches no such doctrine—she contradicts that doctrine; for she directs her clergy to visit the sick, and to join with them in prayer for the forgiveness of their sins, without hearing any confession, or giving any absolution; which prayer is impious or vain, if the Bishop's doctrine be held by the church, since this is plainly a case in which priestly absolution may be had.

He teaches that private confession ought, *in all cases*, to be made to a priest, of all mortal sins, one by one, that the sinner's repentance may be judged of and accepted by the priest, and the necessary absolution be had; or if not *in all cases*, yet in *some*.

The church holds no such doctrine. If she does, why was it not before now found out by some, at least, of our clergy? Did Hobart, the learned, the pious, high church Bishop, know it as her doctrine? Oh, no; for he says, “the churchman *justly* deems *auricular confession* and *private absolution* an encroachment on the rights of *conscience*, an *invasion* of the prerogative of the *Searcher* of hearts, and, with some exceptions, hostile to *domestic* and *social happiness*, and *licentious* and *corrupting* in its tendency.”—Charge to Clergy, 1819.

Did the venerable Bishop White, coeval with the first existence of “our branch of the church,” and who sunk to rest after spending half a century in the episcopal office? Did he recognise the doctrine of Bishop Ives as the doctrine of “our branch of the

church?"—far, very far, from it. For, speaking of that very form of absolution which yet remains in the English office, and which has been shut out of ours—that very form which Bishop Ives approves, and I suppose uses, and which he quotes as conclusive proof of the sense of our church—speaking of this very form, he says, "The other form used in the office for 'the visitation of the sick,' and *properly* discharged from *ours*, is in a tone not warranted by *ancient usage*."

Did Bishop Ives himself know his own doctrine as the doctrine of the church, until he had been more than ten years Bishop of the diocese? Did he ever preach it? Did he ever embody it in a Charge? Did he ever plainly declare, or even hint it, for ten years after he took charge of the diocese? Now, if his were a doctrine of the *church*, if private particular confession of mortal sins were necessary or profitable—if priestly absolution were necessary to the remission of sins—if private absolution were deemed necessary or proper, where was this doctrine hid, that White and Hobart passed their whole lives without finding it?—that Bishop Ives for more than ten years of his episcopate found it not? Many volumes have been published of Sermons, Charges, and Pastorals, by our Bishops, and sermons by eminent clergymen of our church, containing discussions upon repentance, and forgiveness, and many other topics; and yet this doctrine, so important, if true, and so easily to be known, if taught by the church, has never, by design or accident, directly or incidentally, been declared.

How happened it that this doctrine should be reserved for its formal public promulgation to the Pastorals and Sermons of Bishop Ives in the years 1848 and 1849, if it were all along a doctrine of the church? Were all the Bishops and clergy of "our branch of the church," (himself included,) heretofore ignorant and knew it not, or unfaithful and declared it not? How is it, that a doctrine of the church of such high importance should have been so lost in forgetfulness, that now its announcement should fall amongst us with the shock of a meteoric mass?—should startle us like the sudden appearance of an unknown comet, which had escaped the observation of centuries, and the foresight of the astronomer?—should make us to shudder with fearful recollections of her that sitteth on the seven hills in her day of power?

Has Bishop Ives been favoured with a special revelation, a vision of angels to open to him the mind of the church? Truly this doctrine, announced by a protestant bishop in the middle of the nineteenth century, seems like a mid-summer night's dream—like the madness of deep musing over medieval theology, and scholastic refinement, and superstition. Has it been reserved to Bishop Ives to discover the great secret of Protestant Episcopal theology, which had escaped the researches of all other of her bishops and clergy? Has he seen a star in the East, at Oxford or at Rome, and has he gone there to worship? Is he bent on reforming the Reformation? Would he lead us to bow down in adoration at that See which, according to the mar-

tyr Ridley, "is the seat of Satan, and the bishop of the same, who maintaineth the abominations thereof, is ANTICHRIST himself indeed?"

II. But secondly, the Bishop's doctrine is not the doctrine of the Reformed church of England. The proof of this has been necessarily, in some measure, anticipated, because the church of England, and "our branch of the church," do, in most things, agree—in *all* which are truly *essential* to the integrity of the faith and the necessary discipline of the church—and hence, in vindicating the church of the United States, we have, more or less, necessarily vindicated the church of England from the suspicion of holding the Bishop's doctrine. To complete the proof of our present position will, therefore, be the less difficult, from what has been already said.

The two churches agree in the following particulars. Neither any where *enjoins* or *recommends* auricular confession, that is, the confession to a priest of all mortal sins, one by one, numbering and weighing them—neither declares the *necessity*, or recommends the *propriety* of asking a priest to judge of and accept our repentance for such sins, but both agree in exhorting those who cannot by their own private self-examination quiet their consciences, to open their grief to a minister of the church. The English church does not, as Bishop Ives supposes, (see page 49 of his Pastoral,) direct "that *all* sick persons visited are to be moved to a special confession of their sins," for her words in the rubric, in the Visitation Office, are these:

“Then shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins IF *he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter.*” Therefore *all* sick persons are not to be moved to make a special confession of their sins, but only such as *feel* their consciences *troubled* with any *weighty matter*, and, therefore, also the sins to be confessed are only those included in the weighty matter which troubles the conscience; which amounts only to what is directed in the Communion Office, for those whose consciences cannot, by their own efforts, be quieted. The object in both cases is the same, to produce quiet of conscience; and this is to be done in both by the same means, to wit, opening the grief, or the particular sins which produce the disquiet. Hence, it is evident that in this respect both churches agree; that nothing need be confessed—that the penitent is to be moved to confess nothing but that which produces the difficulty, which disquiets or troubles the conscience; this may be, and probably most usually is, though by no means necessarily, some mortal sin or sins. But this sin, if mortal, is not to be confessed *because it is mortal*, but because of its remaining a burden upon the mind, and disabling the sinner from quieting his own conscience in respect thereto, through the *general* directions of the church or the minister. Now, if either of the churches had intended a confession in all cases, she would have said so—if of all *mortal sins, in any case*, she would have said so, and hence, as neither has said it, neither meant it.

That this view of the meaning of the English church is correct, may be otherwise proved. What thought Bishop Latimer, "old Hugh Latimer," as he called himself, that noble martyr of the English church? Hear him in his sermon on the healing of the leper—"Here our papists make ado with their auricular confession, trying to prove the same by this place. For they say Christ sent this man unto the priest to fetch there his absolution; and, therefore, we must go also unto the priest, and, after confession, receive of him absolution of all our sins. But yet we must take heed, say they, that we *forget nothing*; for *all those sins* which are *forgotten*, may *not be forgiven*. And so they bind the consciences of men, persuading them that when their sins were *all numbered and confessed*, it was well. And hereby *they took clean away the passion of Christ*. For they made this *numbering* of sins to be a merit; and so they came at all the secrets that were in men's hearts; so that no emperor or king could say or do or think any thing in his heart *but they knew it*; and so applied all the purposes and intents of princes to their own advantage; and *this was the fruit of their auricular confession*. But to speak of right and true confession, I would to God it were kept in England, for it is a good thing. And those who *find themselves grieved in conscience* might go to a learned man and there obtain of him *comfort from the word of God*, and so come to a *quiet conscience*; which is better and more to be regarded than all the riches of the world. And

surely it grieves me that *such* confessions are not kept in England."

Hear him again in his sixth sermon on the Lord's prayer: "Oh! this is a godly prayer which we ought at all times to say, for we sin daily; therefore we have need to say daily, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' and as David saith, 'Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant;' for we are not able to abide his judgment. If it were not for this pardon, which we have in our Saviour Jesus Christ, we should all perish eternally. For when this word 'forgive,' was spoken with a *good faith* and with a *penitent heart*, there *never was a man but he was heard*. If Judas, that traitor, had said it with a good faith, it should have saved him; but he forgot that point; he was taught it indeed, our Saviour himself taught him to pray so, but he forgot it again. Peter remembered that point: he cried, 'Lord, forgive me,' and so he obtained his pardon, and so shall we do: for we are ever in that case that we have need to say, 'Lord, forgive us;' for we ever do amiss."

Hear Jewell speaking in his "Apology," the voice of the Anglican church. "Christ's disciples did receive their authority, not that they should hear *the private confessions* of the people, and listen to their *whisperings*," &c.

Hear him again in his "Defence." "*Private confession* to be made unto the minister, is neither commanded by Christ nor necessary to salvation." And, therefore, Chrysostom saith, "I will thee not to bewray thyself *openly*, nor to accuse thyself *before others*;

but I counsel thee to obey the prophet, saying, ‘Open thy way unto the *Lord*.’ ”

Hear also the Church of England and of the United States speaking in the second book of Homilies, which by the thirty-fifth Article of Religion is declared “ to contain a *godly* and *true* doctrine, and necessary for these times.” In the “ Second part of the sermon of Repentance,” it is said: “ These are also the words of John the Evangelist, ‘ If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to make us clean from all our wickedness;’ which ought to be understood of the confession that is made *unto God*. For without this confession, sin is not forgiven. This is then the chiefest and most principal confession that in the scriptures and word of God we are bidden to make, and without the which we shall never obtain pardon and forgiveness of our sins. Indeed, besides this there is another kind of confession, which is needful and necessary, and of the same doth St. James speak after this manner, saying, ‘ Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be saved;’ as if he should say, *open that which grieveth you*, that a remedy may be found; and this is commanded both for *him* that *complaineth* and for *him* that *heareth*, that the *one* should show his grief to the *other*. The true meaning of it is, that the faithful ought to acknowledge their offences, whereby some hatred, rancour, grudge, or malice, having risen or grown among them one to another, that a brotherly reconciliation may be had, without the which, nothing that we can do can be acceptable unto God.”

“It may also be thus taken, that we ought to confess our *weakness* and *infirmities one to another*, to the end that, knowing each other’s frailness, we may the more earnestly *pray together* unto Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, that he will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for his Son Jesus Christ’s sake, and not to impute them unto us when he shall render to every man according to his works; and whereas the adversaries go about to arrest this plan, for to maintain their auricular confession withal, they are greatly deceived themselves, and do shamefully deceive others: for if this text ought to be understood of *auricular* confession, then the *priests* are as much bound to confess themselves unto the *lay people*, as the *lay people* are bound to confess themselves to *them*; and if to *pray* is to *absolve*, then the *laity* by this plan hath as great authority to absolve *the priests*, as *the priests* have to absolve *the laity*.” The understanding of it then is as in these words: “Confess your sins one to another”—a persuasion to humility, whereby he willeth us to confess ourselves generally unto our *neighbours*, that we *are sinners*, according to this saying: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” And where that they do allege this saying of our Saviour Jesus Christ unto the leper, to prove auricular confession to stand on God’s word, “Go thy way, and show thyself unto the priests,” do they not see that the leper was cleansed from his leprosy *before* he was by Christ sent unto the priest for to show himself unto him? By the same

reason we must be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy, I mean our sins must be forgiven us, *before* that we come to *confession*. What need we then to *tell forth our sins into the ear of the priest*, sith they be *already taken away*? Therefore, holy Ambrose, in his second sermon upon the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, doth say full well, "Go show thyself unto the priest." Who is the true priest, but he which is the "priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck?" Whereby this holy father doth understand, that, both the priesthood and the law being changed, we ought to acknowledge *none other priest for deliverance from our sins*, but our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, being Sovereign Bishop, doth, with the sacrifice of his body and blood, offered once for ever upon the altar of the cross, most effectually cleanse the spiritual leprosy, and wash away the sins of *all those* that with *true confession of the same do flee unto him*. It is most evident and plain that this auricular confession hath not his warrant of God's word, else it had not been lawful for Nectarius, bishop of Constantinople, upon a just occasion, to have put it down. For when any thing ordained of God is by the lewdness of men abused, the abuse ought to be taken away, and the thing itself suffered to remain. Moreover, these are St. Augustine's words: "What have I to do with men, that they should hear my confession, as though they were able to heal my diseases? A curious sort of men to know another man's life, and slothful to correct and amend their own. Why do

they seek to hear of *me* what *I* am, which will not hear of *thee* what *they* are? and how can they tell, when they hear by me of myself, whether I tell the truth or not; sith no mortal man knoweth what is in man, but the spirit of man which is in him?" Augustine would not have written thus, *if auricular confession had been used in his time.* Being, therefore, not led with the conscience thereof, let us with fear and trembling, and with a true contrite heart, use that *kind of confession that God doth command in his word*; and then, doubtless, as *he is faithful and righteous, he will forgive us our sins*, and make us clean from all wickedness. I do not say, but that, if any do find themselves *troubled* in conscience, they *may* repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to *some other godly learned man*, and *show the trouble and doubt of their conscience* to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God's word; but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to *the numbering of his sins*, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance."

Let us hear Hooker, "judicious" Hooker, from whom the Bishop makes large quotations, but does not quote what Hooker says of *the doctrine and practice of the Church of England.* Is he a supporter of the doctrine of the necessity of priestly absolution to the remission of sin, and of confession to a priest as the condition on which depends the effect of such absolution, or of the necessity or propriety of confessing all

mortal sins to the priest? By no means, if we will allow Hooker to know his own meaning. In the 6th book of his Ecclesiastical Polity, (page 24, Pref. Ed. 1793,) after stating the popish doctrine, that there is no promise of forgiveness made in the scripture upon confession to God *without the priest*, and that every promise is upon that condition, although not expressed, he says: "Is it not strange that the scripture, speaking so much of repentance and of the several duties which appertain thereunto, should *ever mean, and no where mention*, that one condition, without which all the rest is of none effect? or will they say, because our Saviour hath said to his ministers, 'Whose sins ye retain,' &c., and because *they* can remit no more than what the offenders have confessed, that, therefore, by the virtue of his promise, it standeth with the righteousness of God to take away no man's sins until by auricular confession they be opened unto the priest? They are men that would seem to honour antiquity, and none more disposed to depend upon the reverend judgment thereof. I dare boldly affirm, that for many hundred years after Christ, the fathers held no such opinion—they did not gather by our Saviour's word, *any such NECESSITY of seeking the priest's absolution from sin by secret* and (as they now term it,) sacramental *confession*. *Public* confession they thought necessary *by way of discipline*, not *private* confession, as in the nature of a sacrament, necessary."

Then after having considered at large the state of this matter in primitive times, the popish doctrines and

those of the Bohemians, Lutherans, &c., respecting it, he proceeds (page 47,) to give the opinions, as he understands them, of the English Church.

“It standeth with us in the Church of England, as touching *public* confession thus: first, seeing day by day we, in our church, begin our public prayers to Almighty God with public acknowledgment of our sins, in which confession, every man prostrate as it were before his glorious majesty, crieth against himself, and the minister with one sentence pronounceth universally all clear whose acknowledgment so made hath proceeded from a true penitent mind; what reason is there every man should not, under the general terms of confession, represent to himself his own particulars whatsoever, and adjoining thereunto that affection which a contrite spirit worketh, embrace, to as full effect, the words of divine grace, as if the same were severally and particularly uttered with addition of prayers, imposition of hands, or all the ceremonies and solemnities that might be used for the strengthening of men's affiance in God's peculiar mercy towards them? Such complements [ceremonies,] are helps to support our weakness, and not causes that serve to procure or produce his gifts, as David speaketh. The difference of *general* and *particular* forms of confession and absolution is not so material that *any man's safety or ghostly good* should depend upon it.”

“And for *private* confession and absolution it standeth *thus with us*: The minister's power to absolve is publicly taught and professed; the *church* not denied

to have authority either of abridging or enlarging the use and exercise of that power; upon the people no such necessity imposed of opening their transgressions unto men, as if remission of sins otherwise were impossible; neither any such opinion had of the thing itself, as though it were either unlawful or unprofitable, save only for those inconveniences which the world hath by experience observed in it heretofore. And in regard thereof, the Church of England hath hitherto thought it the safer way to refer men's hidden crimes unto God and themselves only; howbeit, not without special caution for the admonition of such as come to the Holy Sacrament, and for the comfort of such as are ready to depart the world." And after discussing the exhortation in the Communion Office, and the Visitation of the Sick, he concludes the whole matter as follows: "In some, when the offence doth stand *only between God and man's conscience*, the counsel is good which St. Chrysostom giveth, 'I wish thee not to bewray thyself publicly, nor to accuse thyself *before others*. I wish thee to obey the Prophet, who saith, 'Disclose thy way unto the *Lord*, confess thy sins before *him*; tell thy sins to him, that he may blot them out.' If thou be abashed to tell unto any other wherein thou hast offended, *rehearse them every day between thee and thy soul*. I wish thee not to confess them to thy *fellow-servant*, who may upbraid thee with them; tell them to God, *who will cure them*; there is no need for thee, in the presence of witnesses, to acknowledge them; let God *alone* see

thee at thy confession. I pray and beseech you that you would, more often than you do, confess to God eternal, and reckoning up your trespasses, desire his pardon. I carry you not into a theatre or open court of many of your fellow-servants, I seek not to detect your crimes before men; *disclose your conscience before God*, unfold yourselves to *him*; lay forth your wounds before him, the best physician that is, and desire of him salve for them. *If hereupon it follow*, as it did with David, 'I thought I will confess against myself my wickedness unto thee, O Lord, and *thou forgavest me the plague of my sin*,' we have our desire, and there remaineth *only* thankfulness, accompanied with perpetuity of care to avoid that, which being not avoided, we know we cannot remedy without new perplexity and grief. *Contrariwise*, if peace with God *do not follow* the pains we have taken in seeking after it, if we *continue disquieted and not delivered from anguish, mistrusting whether that we do be sufficient*; it argueth, that our sore doth exceed the power of our own skill, and that the wisdom of the pastor must bind up those parts, which, being bruised, are not able to be re-cured of themselves." Again, did Hooker hold with Bishop Ives, that "priestly absolution from all deadly sin, after baptism, is necessary," that the priests *when they pronounce these words*, (I absolve thee, &c.) over the truly penitent, do convey *really and directly* God's pardon to their consciences for all their sins and offences committed against him?—that it is "pre-

sumption to trust for pardon to a repentance not accepted by the representatives of Christ;" or that *they alone* have "the power to remit or retain sins," as between the sinner and God? Surely not. For he says, (page 93,) "Whereas, therefore, *with us*, the remission of sin is ascribed unto God, as a thing which proceedeth from him *only*, and *presently* followeth upon the virtue of true repentance appearing in man; that which *we* attribute to the *virtue*, they (the papists) do not only impute to the *sacrament* of repentance; but, having made repentance a sacrament, and thinking of sacraments as they do, they are enforced to make the ministry of the priests and their absolution a cause of that which the sole omnipotency of God worketh. And yet, for my own part, I am not able well to conceive how their doctrine, that absolution is really a cause out of which our deliverance from sin doth ensue, can cleave with the Council of Trent, defining, '*that contrition perfected with charity, doth at all times itself reconcile offenders to God, before they come to receive actually the sacrament of penance!*' How can it stand with those discourses of the learned Rabbies, which grant *that whosoever turneth unto God with his whole heart, hath immediately his sins taken away; that if a man be truly converted, his pardon can neither be denied nor delayed?* It doth not *stay* for the priest's absolution, but *presently* followeth: surely if every contrite sinner, in whom there is charity, and a sincere conversion of heart, have the remission

of sins given him *before he seek it at the priest's hands*; if reconciliation to God be a present and *immediate sequel* upon every such conversion or change; it must of necessity follow, seeing no man can be a true penitent or contrite, which doth not both love God and sincerely abhor sin; that therefore they *all before absolution attain forgiveness*; whereunto notwithstanding, absolution is *pretended* a cause so necessary, that sin, *without it*, except in some *rare extraordinary case*, cannot possibly be remitted. Shall absolution be a cause producing and working that effect, which is *always brought forth without it*, and had, *before absolution be thought of*? But when they which are thus beforehand pardoned of God shall come to be also assoiled by the priest, I would know *what force* his absolution hath in this case? Are they able to say here, that the *priest* doth *remit any thing*? Yet when any of ours ascribeth the work of remission to God, and interpreteth the priest's sentence to be but a *solemn declaration* of that which God himself *hath already performed*, they scorn at it," &c., (p. 98.) "Therefore, the further we wade the better we see it still appears that the priest doth *never* in absolution, no not so much *as by way of service and ministry, really* either forgive them, take away the uncleanness or remove the punishment of sin; but if the party penitent become contrite, he hath, by their own grant, absolution, *before* absolution; if not contrite, although the priest should seem a thousand times to absolve him, all were in vain."

“If there be a will and desire to return, he (God) receiveth, embraceth, and omitteth nothing, which may restore us to former happiness; yea, that which is yet above all the rest, albeit we cannot, in the duty of satisfying him, attain what we ought and would, but come far behind our mark, he taketh nevertheless in good worth, that little which we do; be it never so mean, we lose not our labour therein. *The least and lowest step* of repentance in St. Chrysostom’s judgment serveth, and setteth us above them that perish in their sin. Let not, therefore, the imperfect fear; let them only proceed and go forward.”

It is plain that whatever Hooker may have held or taught, he did *not* hold or teach the doctrine of the Bishop. It is plain also, that Hooker, in stating the practice of the early church as to private confession and absolution, did not mean it as matter of *necessary* discipline. For he says, the church is “not denied to have authority either of abridging or enlarging the use and exercise” thereof, and that the English church had “hitherto thought it the *safer way* to refer men’s *hidden* crimes unto God and themselves only.” And it is evident, that if the early discipline was not binding on the English church, but might be varied as in her godly judgment seemeth best; the American church hath the same liberty to make such other alterations as she may judge most safe and expedient.

What thought Jewell of this private confession? Did he consider it of a sacramental character, or requiring the presence and judgment of a priest? Surely

he did not, for in his "treatise of the Sacraments," after considering confession unto God, he says, (Works, Vol. VIII. p. 60,) "*The other sort of confession made unto men*, I do not condemn. It may do much good, if well used—Saint James commendeth it among the faithful; 'Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.' " He speaketh not of *priest* or *minister*, but of every one of the faithful. *Every Christian* may do this help unto another, to take knowledge of the secret and inner *grief of the heart*, to look upon the wound which sin and wickedness hath made, and by godly advice, and earneſt prayer for him, to recover his brother. "That the priest should hear the *private confessions* of the people, and listen to their whisperings; that every man should be bound to their *auicular confession*; it is no commandment or ordinance of God; it is devised and established by men, and was lately confirmed by Innocentius the Third."

But to what purpose should the presence of a priest be deemed necessary in this private examination? We have already seen from Hooker, that his absolution availeth nothing, even "by way of service and ministry," to convey pardon; for that the contrite are already pardoned before his absolution, and to those who are not contrite, his absolution, ever so often repeated, conveyeth no remission.

Is help required in offering counsel and comfort to one whose conscience is troubled? To this a priest is not necessarily required, for as we have seen from

Jewell, that good office may be performed by a godly layman. Is it because sacrifices to God can only be offered by a priest? Every faithful Christian hath the inward priesthood, which enables him to offer the spiritual sacrifice of his private confession and prayer unto God;—for thus says Jewell, (Works, Vol. IX. p. 458,) “But ye tell us there is a priesthood internal, and a priesthood external—and there is a difference between laymen and priests. There is not one of us that ever taught otherwise. We know that the priest or minister of the Church of God is divided from the rest of his brethren, as was the tribe of Levi from the children of Israel—and hath a special office over the people. Neither may any man force himself into that office without lawful calling. But as touching *the inward priesthood and exercise of the soul*, we say, even as St. Peter and St. John and Tertullian have said; in this sense every faithful Christian man is a priest, and offereth unto God spiritual sacrifices. In this only sense, I say, and none otherwise. Now, if any man shall think it strange to hear a layman in any sense called a priest, may it please him to peruse some part of that hereafter followeth in this Defence. There shall he find by the authorities of Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose, Saint Hierome, and Saint Chrysostom, that whosoever is a member of Christ’s body, whosoever is a child of the Church, whosoever is baptized in Christ, and beareth his name, is fully invested with this priesthood, and therefore may justly be called a priest. And wheresoever there

be three such together, as Tertullian saith, yea, though they be only laymen, yet have they a church." St. Augustine saith, "Every man offereth up the sacrifice of our Lord's passion for his sins." Likewise, St. Cyprian: "All men, that of the name of Christ be called Christians, offer up unto God the daily sacrifice, being ordained of God the priests of holiness. Thus we see all Christian men are priests, and offer up to God the daily sacrifice, that is, the sacrifice of Christ's passion."

From what has been offered upon the construction of the rubric, and from the quotations I have made from Latimer, Hooker, Jewell, and the Homily, the conclusion seems inevitable, that the Church of England never at any time since the Reformation, has regarded a particular confession of sins to a priest—a numbering of them—a weighing of them, as on any occasion either necessary, desirable, or allowable; that she nowhere recognises the doctrine of "the *necessity* of priestly absolution in any case, to the remission of mortal sins; but that, on the contrary, her teaching is, according to Hooker and the Homily, that the absolution is merely declaratory of what God has already done if the sinner be truly contrite, and utterly without effect if he be not contrite; and is therefore not a "periodical sponge" to wipe out sins, but an assurance of God's willingness, and his promise to forgive the penitent, and therefore likely to carry comfort to the hearts of those who feel in themselves true contrition for their sins.

In one respect the Churches of England and the

United States differ; the English allows, and in one case directs a private absolution to be pronounced to the penitent; while our church allows it not.

I am far from supposing this to be any essential difference between the two churches. Such an absolution, properly understood, involves necessarily no superstition, "no invasion of the prerogative of the Searcher of hearts;" and, not being in any case required but only in some cases recommended, interposes no barrier to full communion between the two churches. But our church has, nevertheless, struck out of her Liturgy and Prayer Book all authority for a private absolution. She has done this in virtue of an undoubted authority; for the private absolution "being neither commanded by Christ nor necessary to salvation," being according to the view of the Church of England, as well as our own, not a necessary and perpetual discipline of the church; she, as a national church, had the same authority over this as over any matter of discipline whatever. She acted properly, according to Bishop White, as already quoted, and according to Bishop Brownel (note eighth on the Morning Prayer,) "the compilers of our liturgy have prudently omitted it altogether, since it is susceptible of an interpretation which may be thought to savour too much of the abuses of absolution in the Romish church."

But whether *wisely* and *prudently* omitted by our church or not, it is omitted. It belongs not to our services, and cannot be lawfully used under the au-

thority of our church, more than the Athanasian creed, or the prayers for the king and royal family in the English book.

But in what sense is this absolution used in the English service? By some it is said that the indicative part, "I absolve," &c., is a remission as between the sinner and God. By others, that it is only a remission of those church censures to which the sinner might stand exposed or have actually incurred.

Now the former sense is attributed to it by Bishop Ives, and he dismisses Dr. Wheatly, who entertains a contrary opinion, by the assertion "that nothing short of the most inveterate and blinding attachment to theory could have led to such an interpretation." Well, this is a convenient method of setting aside the judgment of a learned and able divine of the highest eminence in the church, and whose work on the Common Prayer has been included in the list of books appointed by our house of Bishops to be studied by all candidates for Orders. But what is the theory which has blinded the eyes of this otherwise clear-sighted man; and does not the Bishop think it just possible that an advocate of his own system may experience, unknown to himself, a little of the same blinding influence? But let Dr. Wheatly speak for himself, and let us do him the justice to see how blind he was when he wrote on this subject. [Section fifth of his Comments on the Visitation Office.] "After the sick person has made a special confession of his sins, as has been mentioned above, the priest is to absolve him if

he humbly and heartily desire it, after this sort : Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners, who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and, by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“Now whether the church designs, by this form, that the priest shall directly convey God’s pardon to the conscience of the sinner, for his sins and offences committed against Him; or whether that he shall only remit the censures of the church, and continue him in the privilege of church-communion, which he may be supposed to have forfeited by the sins he has confessed, is thought by some not to be clearly or determinately expressed. But if we look forward to the Collect immediately after to be used, it looks as if the church did only intend the remission of ecclesiastical censures and bonds. For, in that prayer, the penitent is said still *most earnestly to desire pardon and forgiveness*; which surely there would be no occasion to do, if he had been actually pardoned and forgiven by God, by virtue of the absolution pronounced before. Again, the priest offers a special request, that God would *preserve and continue him in the unity of the church*; which seems to suppose that the foregoing absolution had been pronounced in order to restore him to its peace. And, therefore, since the form will bear this sense, without straining or putting any force upon the words, I hope it will be no offence to

interpret them so, as is most consistent with the original commission given by our Lord, and the exercise of it in the purest ages of the world."

In the sections following, Dr. Wheatly examines the commission given by our Lord to his church—the power of the keys—and shows why he deems it to have been a "power of admitting into, and shutting out of the Christian church;" the passage is too long to be here inserted, but I observe from a note, that in that opinion he is supported by Dr. Hammond, Dr. Marshall and Archbishop Potter. And in this view, Jewell, Burnet, and Bishop Whittingham, seem also to concur.

For in the "Apology," Jewell thus expresses himself: "We say, that the office of *loosing* consisteth in this point: that the minister should either offer, by the preaching of the gospel, the merits of CHRIST, and full pardon to such as have lowly and contrite hearts, and do unfeignedly repent themselves, pronouncing unto the same a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins and hope of everlasting salvation; or else, that the same minister, when any *have offended their brother's minds* with a *great offence*, with a *notable* and *open fault*, whereby they have, as it were, banished and made themselves strangers from the common fellowship, and from the body of CHRIST—then, after perfect amendment of such persons, doth reconcile them, and bring them home again, and restore them to the company and unity of the faithful."—(Works, VIII. 288.) And on this passage, Bishop

Whittingham, in his edition, page 39, remarks: "*Two kinds of absolution* are here recognised: first, *virtual*, by declaration of the *terms of pardon*: such are the forms of absolution in our service. Second, *official*, by re-admission of expelled communicants. A statement, the same in effect, is made by Burnet: Upon repentance sincerely begun, and honestly pursued, we do in general, as the heralds of God's mercy, and the ministers of His gospel, pronounce to our people daily, the offers that are made us of mercy and pardon by CHRIST JESUS. This we do in our daily service, and in a more peculiar manner before we go to the Holy Communion. We do also, as we are a body that may be offended with the sins of others, *forgive the scandals* committed against *the church*." Dr. Wheatly's interpretation, supported by such names as Hammond, Marshall, Potter, Jewell, Burnet and Whittingham, may well be deemed the true exposition of the form; and if so, the only difference between the English church and ours is, that the former authorizes the priest to pronounce an absolution from church censures, and the latter does not.

But if Bishop Ives' interpretation be correct, and Dr. Wheatly's erroneous; if the absolution be intended to remit all sins, as between God and the sick person, and so to restore him to God's favour, the consequence is fatal to the theory of the Bishop. For the sick person is to be moved to make a special confession *only* "if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter," and, as I have already shown, then

only of the matter which troubles his conscience; and upon this confession, he is absolved of "*all his sins*;" and so some sins are pardoned, though not confessed—which is against the Bishop's doctrine of confessing *all*, "one by one," in order to the effect of absolution. Again, if the sick person be not troubled "with any weighty matter," he is not to be moved to confess at all, and in that case no absolution is to be pronounced; for the rubric says, "*after which confession* the priest shall absolve," &c. Now, in such case, are the sins of the sick person remitted or not? If they are, then by the judgment of the English church mortal sins may be remitted without either confession to, or absolution by, a priest; and so, by her judgment, there is "no necessity either of such confession or absolution to the remission of mortal sin,"—which is directly against the Bishop's doctrine. If such sins are not remitted to the sick person, then he dies in his sins; and not from his neglect, but from the ignorance or unfaithfulness of the church, which either knew not, or knowing said not, that confession to a priest of mortal sins is necessary to remission.

But it may be said, that the condemnation by the Church of England is only of an *enforced* private confession, and that she allows a *voluntary* one. The condemnation of that church is of *auricular confession as then used*, and her allowance is of what she deemed a fitting substitute therefor—a "true and proper confession;" to wit, that persons finding themselves "troubled in conscience" *might* repair to their

“curate, or to some other godly learned man,” and “show the trouble and doubt of their consciences to them,” not that they might offer, or the priest hear, a particular statement of all their mortal sins. The church, then, meant (as I think clearly appears) to *condemn* the *enforcing*, and to *disallow* the *use* of these private confessions of all mortal sins. But suppose it otherwise, does not the Bishop’s doctrine *compel* private confession? Surely; if the doctrine of Rome compels it. Her penitents are not seized, and by physical force or bodily pain compelled to make confession; but because she teaches that private confession unto a priest and his absolution are necessary to the remission of sin, she thereby puts a moral compulsion upon her children, to make confession; since what is necessary to remission of sins *must* be done, if remission of sins be necessary to salvation. What does the Bishop teach? the *necessity* of priestly absolution after a private particular confession, in order to the *remission* of mortal sin. What teaches the Church of Rome? According to her distinguished prelate, Trevern, Bishop of Strasburgh, she teaches thus: “If the confession made to God *alone* were sufficient, Jesus Christ would have given to his ministers the power of absolving to no purpose, because the first means being more easy and of as certain an effect, it is clear that sinners would be perfectly satisfied with it.” “We see clearly that by investing his ministers with the power of *binding and loosing*, he attaches to this power the *promise of pardon*;

but we no where read that he has attached it to confession made *only* to God. In order to obtain the pardon of his (the penitent's) faults, it is no longer sufficient for him to lament them in himself and before God; he must, also, *when it can be done*, humble himself so far as to confess them without disguise and to the best of his power, in order to receive the benefit of sacerdotal absolution."

Why here is the Bishop's own doctrine in all its parts: priestly absolution required by the same interpretation of the power of the keys, necessary to the same end—the pardon or remission of sins—to be obtained upon the same confession; a confession not to God only, but to the priest, and subject to the same qualification; where it may be done or may be had.

What is not to be found in the writings of English or American Bishops is here fully and plainly laid down by the Romish Bishop of Strasburgh, and Bishop Ives is found side by side in ecclesiastical position with Trevern, and opposed to White, and Hobart, and Ravenscroft, and Brownell, and Whittingham, to Latimer, and Jewell, and Hooker, and Burnet, and (so far as we know, or have reason to think,) to all the Bishops in the Reformed Church in England and America.

When, then, the Homily I have cited condemned the enforced "numbering of sins," as being against "true Christian liberty," it condemned the very doctrine now put forth by Bishop Ives.

Indeed it must be said, in justice to the Bishop of

Strasburgh, that the doctrine of Bishop Ives is even more pointedly condemned by the Homily than the Romish doctrine as stated by him; for all that he requires is, that the penitent shall not voluntarily "disguise" his sins, but confess them all "to the best of his power," whilst Bishop Ives does not in terms make any such allowance for infirmity of memory, but apparently requires, at all hazards, a confession of every mortal sin, "one by one," in order to the penitent's receiving the benefit of absolution. And thus a bad memory becomes the unpardonable sin!

Indeed Bishop Ives makes the necessity of priestly absolution to remission of sins to be greater and more stringent than, according to the church, is the necessity of the sacraments to salvation. For the church only declares these to be "generally" necessary, and by that qualification she avoids giving sentence of condemnation against those who, from ignorance or inveterate prejudice, and other like causes, may not seek, as well as those who cannot obtain them; while the Bishop declares the necessity for priestly absolution in all cases "where it may be had,"—thereby giving it more importance than the church gives to the sacraments. For why are the sacraments ever necessary to salvation, but because they are commanded by Christ, and are, therefore, necessary to the remission of sins? Nothing prevents salvation save sin; and so sin remitted, salvation follows, the only obstacle thereto, sin, being by remission taken out of the way. Therefore, as by an undeniable consequence

from the Bishop's doctrine of the necessity of priestly absolution to the remission of sin, such absolution is necessary to salvation; it follows, that the sacraments may be unnecessary to salvation (being only generally necessary,) when, under like circumstances, the necessity of absolution may remain—that being always necessary where it may be had, and only to be dispensed with when it cannot be had. And so, by the Bishop's doctrine, priestly absolution is more generally required and less readily dispensed with, and, consequently, of higher moment in our system than the sacraments instituted by Christ himself.

Upon the whole, if we are at liberty to form an opinion as to the meaning of the Liturgy and Articles, and in order to do this, may consider and compare these with the Homilies set forth and declared by the church to contain a godly and true doctrine—to examine what has been the sense attached to her teaching by the wisest and best of those, who, in England, aided in the Reformation, or in this country revised our Liturgy—and if we are at liberty to hold and maintain that interpretation which, upon such examination, we find, on all hands, adopted as true: then may we, I think, upon most sure and certain grounds, some of which have been here given, conclude that the doctrine set forth by the Bishop, as to the necessity of priestly absolution to the remission of sins, is not, and never has been, the doctrine either of the Reformed Church of England or of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States—but, on the contrary, hath always been

by both rejected and condemned; and, consequently, that all the dutiful children of our branch of the church must, or at least may, reject and disavow it.

The doctrine of the Bishop is, as formally announced in his two Pastorals, sufficient to produce alarm in every true son of the *Protestant* Episcopal Church in the United States, and that alarm will certainly not be allayed when we consider that doctrine in connexion with other teaching and other conduct of the Bishop, which give it additional force and significance, and open most fully its true extent and application.

He has instituted at Valle Crucis a monastic order, a society within the church, composed of persons bound to him by a vow of *celibacy*, poverty, and *obedience*, the form of which the Bishop does not give us in his Pastoral, though he lets out the objects of the society and the duties of the orders. He has given to the members, as their peculiar dress, "a black cassock, extending from the throat to the ankles," answering to that worn by members of the Romish Order of Jesus. He allows to be placed on the altar a pyx, in which are reserved the remaining consecrated elements after a communion, a practice used in the Romish Church, but disallowed and forbidden by ours. Again: there is used at Valle Crucis, with the approbation of the Bishop, a little manual of devotion, in which, the Bishop says, (note p. 24,) were some "expressions" which, upon being objected to, were by him promptly altered. Now, these "expressions" were prayers to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, and these prayers

the Bishop does not deem *wrong in principle*, for in a letter to one of his presbyters, he says: "I feel bound, however, to say, that while I allow no prayers to the Virgin Mary or to Saints, not because they are *wrong in themselves*, but because they are *liable to abuse*, I do still retain," &c.

Further, it is believed in the Diocese, upon the statements of those who had opportunity to know the truth, and no motive to falsify it, that the Bishop at one time expressed, in the presence of several clergymen, the opinion that our church is in schism, and that he could not advise a Romanist to leave his communion for ours in order to obtain greater religious advantages; that, at another, he announced to two of his clergy an intention to send a "penitentiary" through the parishes in the Diocese to receive the confessions of the people; and that, at a Confirmation, he publicly declared, that confession is *not* to be made to God *directly*, but *through* a priest. Now, it must be admitted that these things are calculated to give a more decided Romish character to the formal teachings of the pastoral, showing, as they do, that the Bishop not only coincides with that church in holding the necessity of priestly absolution, but also in the propriety of monastic orders of clergymen, living and acting under a distinct organization of their own—the lawfulness and expediency of vowing celibacy and of promising other obedience to the Bishop as the head of such an order, than the church deems to be due him in his episcopal character, and that he holds with the Church of Rome, the invo-

cation of Saints to be *lawful*, though our Church declares it *repugnant to the word of God*. Now, these views were not always the views of the Bishop. He once looked upon Romanism neither with favour nor allowance. In 1836 he addressed a solemn Charge to his clergy, which was "published by request of the Convention" of the Diocese, a Charge full of sound Protestant teaching, eloquently expressed, and ably enforced. On the third page will be found this passage: "Never, I am convinced, has there been a period since the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, bearing more critically upon its interests than the one in which we have been summoned to our post, as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem. This period indeed appears to be marked by a peculiarity that gives it a fearful distinction. There have been other periods perhaps as dark and trying. The awful reign of ANTI-CHRIST *immediately preceding the Reformation*, the desperate alliance of the 17th century between *infidelity, dissent, and Romanism* in the mother country, formed a crisis of evils, it is true, of the most alarming description. But these evils brought with them their remedy. Their *odious and unblushing character* aroused, at once, into action, every faithful son of the Church, and secured a united effort—an effort directed by more than human skill—for her rescue and defence. But *now*, the *same evils* under a different guise are coming upon her, and her sons are comparatively *asleep*: few seem willing to contemplate or acknowledge her danger. Religious excitements, fol-

lowed on the one hand by a rapid increase of infidelity, and on the other by the tumults of schism, or the disasters of bold experiment, darken the *fair face*, and weaken the bands of *Protestantism*—while *POPERY*, taking advantage of this state of miserable disorder, is again rallying her scattered forces, and making *incredible advances to an ascendancy in our land of freedom*." Thus spoke the Bishop in 1836 of Romanism, of its character and of its efforts to establish a dreaded ascendancy. But now, he seems scarcely to recognise his position, or that of the Church, as "Protestantism," or in any sense antagonistic to Rome. And, amongst the reasons assigned in a note, (pastoral, p. 69,) why he never speaks or writes against Romanists, we find these: "They who speak against others are very likely to speak falsely." "However great may be their errors, *Romanists* belong to the *body* of *CHRIST*, and hence to the *same family with us*, and it is neither *lawful* to speak against the members of Christ's body, nor *in good taste* to speak against members of our own family." Who then has changed? For a change there has been somewhere. If the papal power, immediately preceding the Reformation, was *Anti-Christ*, when did it cease to be Anti-Christian, and become a member of Christ's body? If it was necessary and proper in 1836 to warn the clergy of the Diocese against the efforts of Popery to establish an ascendancy "in our land of freedom," how is it that Romanists are *now* members of one family with us, and good taste warns us not to speak against them?

Has Popery changed? Has it abandoned one single position of doctrine held by it just previous to the Reformation—relaxed one unlawful term of communion then prescribed—or modified, in any respect, the decrees of Trent, or the creed of Pius the Fourth? Has it ceased since 1836 to make efforts for ascendancy in our country, or pursued them with less of energy and success? Or, have the views of the Bishop changed, and does he now feel a kindly inclination towards the system which he then denounced, and look with complacency upon an ascendancy which he then dreaded? And which of his official acts: that Charge of '36, or the Pastoral of '49, both solemn, formal promulgations of opinion and doctrine, and bearing the impress of the same episcopal authority, are we to take as *defining* the true position of “our branch of the one Catholic Church?” Which are we to follow? or may we presume so far as to choose between them?

Again, in the same Charge, he fully recognises the authority of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, over himself as a Protestant Bishop, as well as over his clergy, and his and their obligations not to depart at all from her authoritative standards of doctrine; for, he thus expresses himself, (page 10,) “Bound by the solemnity of an oath, at the altar of God, to give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, and as *this* Church hath received the same, it can require no words from me to enforce the further and consequent obligations to diligence in reading the Holy

Scriptures, and in such studies as help to a knowledge of them. *As Protestants*, we agree in taking the *Scriptures* as the *rule of faith*, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. But as ministers of the *Protestant Episcopal Church*, we have made a *solemn declaration* of our belief in *her* doctrines as *scriptural*, and have vowed fidelity to her interests, and *submission to her authority*, in diligently setting them forth as the *doctrines of God*. We are not at liberty, therefore, to depart, *in the slightest degree*, from the faith of the Church, as *expressed in her Articles and Liturgy*. Our professed submission was voluntary. It must be *real and unqualified*." This was his teaching in 1836, but evidently it is not that of the Pastoral of '49. There is in the last, a studied effort to bind us to the Liturgy of another Church, to keep around us the chains of a colonial dependence on the Church of England, and, instead of expounding the doctrines of our Church by her *own revised Liturgy*, to refer, for that purpose, to prayers and creeds, and absolutions which she has deliberately and carefully rejected. To her *Articles*, so binding in 1836, what submission does the Bishop now render? How is it, that he, having made a solemn declaration of belief in her doctrines as Scriptural, and having vowed submission to her authority, in diligently setting them forth as the doctrines of God, was bound *in 1836*, not to

depart *in the slightest degree* from her Articles and Liturgy; and yet he is *now* at liberty to hold and teach that, what she has declared *repugnant to the word of God*, is not *wrong in itself*? Have her doctrines ceased to be the doctrines of God? Has the Bishop's vow ceased to be binding?

In the same Charge, he says, (p. 20,) "The church exacts of you diligence, by stated catechetical lectures and instruction, in informing the youth and others of your congregations, in her Liturgy." Pursuing this theme, he thus expresses himself, (p. 21, 22,) "Let a congregation be habituated, *each Lord's day*, to bend the knee before their *Almighty and most merciful Father*, and *confess* that they have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep; that they have offended against His holy laws; that there is no health in them; that they are miserable sinners, and deserve to be punished for their offences, and let them *supplicate* to be spared for Jesus Christ's sake." "Let them be habituated to *confess* that from God all holy desires, all good counsels and all just works do proceed, and to *beseech* Him to indue them with the grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend their lives according to His holy word." "Let them be habituated to *supplicate* their good Lord to give them a clean heart." (p. 24.) "Let them be habituated *thus* to *confess*, to *pray*, and to give thanks; their minds being duly disciplined *by instruction and admonition*, and how feeble will be the assaults of error!" Thus spoke the Bishop in 1836. Thus in urging the clergy to discharge their

full duty to their congregations, at a period which he deemed eminently dangerous to faith and religious fidelity, he set out the means by which, under God, their people were to be preserved. In these instructions can any one discover even a *germ* which might be *developed* into the Pastorals of 1849? There is no *mention*, no *hint*, that priestly absolution was necessary or desirable—that confession was to be made to man; or that any agency between God and man, save the mediation of Jesus Christ, ought to be sought, or might be had in the church, to reconcile us to God. There is no warning to the people against “the presumption of trusting for pardon to a repentance not accepted by a priest, and no suggestion to the clergy of diligence in calling the people—any of the people—to the confessing and numbering of sins, in order to the exercise of their “priestly judgment” in granting that absolution which is necessary, where it may be had, “to the remission of mortal sin.” Now, did these things, in 1836, belong, and did the Bishop then know them to belong, to the discipline or doctrine of the church? If so, why did he not urge them on his clergy? If he knew them not, how happened he to be *then* ignorant of a doctrine of the church so important, and bound up with the hope of forgiveness to baptized and lapsing Christians?

It must be apparent, I think, to all who consider what has been submitted, that there was, previously to the meeting of the late Diocesan Convention, at Salisbury, very sufficient *cause* of alarm. There was,

in fact, a great alarm every where in the Diocese—a great anxiety—a deep agitation, pervading “thoughtful and earnest” members of the church, confined to no particular parish—to no particular class of persons, but general in every parish, amongst persons of every class;—a surprise—a horror—a dismay, to find their Bishop appearing to have ceased to be protestant, and to have become Romish in his feelings and opinions. This state of mind was not confined to the laity, but affected also almost the entire body of our settled and established parochial clergy. For a short time, after the Salisbury Convention, a feeling of hope and comfort, more or less, prevailed amongst our people, in consequence of proceedings had in that Convention, to which we must now turn our attention.

On the Saturday of the Convention, the committee on the state of the church made their report, in which they “deplore the existence amongst its members of great agitation and alarm, arising from the impression that doctrines have been preached, not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of *this* church, and that ceremonies and practices have been introduced, either unauthorized by the customs of *this* Church, or in plain violation of *its* Rubrics;” and they “state as their full conviction that, whether the case be so or not, the far greater part of the clergy are entirely opposed to any such departure from the doctrines of the church; that they desire the introduction of no ceremonies unauthorized by the customs of *this* church, and are still less tolerant of such as violate the Rubrics.” After

which a Charge to the Clergy from the Bishop was read, in these words:—

“BRETHREN OF THE CLERGY,—In the report on the state of the Church, made by members of your order, reference is made to excitement in the Diocese, growing out of the idea that doctrines are promulged and practices encouraged among us more or less repugnant to the authorized doctrines and usages of our branch of the church. As these doctrines and practices are not specified, your Bishop can address you only in general terms. But he does, by way of Charge, hereby address you, and authorize you, when you return to your several parishes, to assure your people, that no efforts shall be wanting on his part, so long as God may give him the jurisdiction in North Carolina, to hinder the inculcation of any doctrine or the introduction of any practice—come from whatever quarter it may—not in strict accordance with the Liturgy of our church, as illustrated and defined by those standards of interpretation authorized by the Church itself.

“In respect to a particular question, which has agitated the Diocese of late, the question of auricular confession, I may here express my conviction that the Book of Common Prayer, our standard of Doctrine, Discipline and Worship, does not authorize any clergyman of this church to teach or enforce such confession as necessary to salvation; and that *the only confession which it authorizes*, is the voluntary confession

of the penitent, *in accordance with the exhortation in the office for the Holy Communion.*”

In the Convention this Charge produced the happiest effect. When heard of in the parishes it was received with general satisfaction. Noticing as it did the report of the committee, and it being well known that the reference in the report was mainly to doctrines taught and practices approved by the Bishop, the Charge could be understood in no other sense than as a denial of his having preached the objectionable doctrines, and approved the objectionable practices, or else an intimation that the Bishop had seen reason to change his views, and would change his conduct. But it was not long before we learned that our hopes were fallacious, and that the Bishop, surrounded by the order of the Holy Cross, at Valle Crucis, had resolved to press to the utmost his objectionable doctrines, and to maintain them at all hazards. Then it was, that, as this report gained belief, the alarm and agitation of the Diocese returned, and gathered strength from the sudden overthrow of that hope which had been produced by the apparently cordial agreement between the Bishop and the Convention.

For myself, I confess I am not able (and many are, no doubt, in my situation,) to reconcile the Bishop's Charge, in its evident meaning, with the ground assumed in his Pastoral, towards these proceedings of the Convention. He distinctly admits in the Pastoral that the report on the state of the church was intended to embrace himself (page 9;) that this was well known

at the Convention, and, by consequence, was then known to himself. If so, why did he not in his Charge at once take the ground which he has assumed in his Pastoral? Was he too ill to write a protest, while well enough to write the Charge? Instead of a rep oof, he refers to the report with apparent satisfaction, and, without taking any exception to what the committee had done, declares his readiness to hinder the inculcation of any doctrine, or introduction of any practice, *come from what quarter it may*, not in strict accordance with the Liturgy of *our* church; and also expresses his conviction, that the only confession authorized by that church is that referred to by the exhortation in the Communion Office. And now in his Pastoral (page 60,) he treats it as a great mistake to suppose that in his Charge he gave up any of his previous views and teachings, and declares in a note at the end of the Pastoral, his adherence to the substance of the Charge as his belief always and still. What, then, did the Bishop mean by his Charge? What is the *substance* to which he adheres, and the *form* which he abandons? He knew that the report was aimed at him; that the excitements referred to grew out of his teaching, and out of practices allowed by him. To these, therefore, his Charge must be understood by the Convention to refer, and to pledge him to do something to moderate the excitements and remove the cause of complaint. And did not the Bishop know that the Charge would be so understood by the Convention? would be, must be understood as giving

up some of his previous views and teachings? Did he not *intend* it to be so understood by them? Now, is not a promise a pledge, an assurance, binding in that sense in which he who makes it knows or supposes it will be understood by him to whom it is made? Surely the Bishop did not—it cannot be believed that he did—intend to mislead the Convention, through a concealed meaning not discoverable by them, and to send the members home, trusting to a promise, a pledge, an assurance, which he never designed to redeem in the sense in which he *knew* they understood it? Can the Bishop give—he has not yet given—an explanation of this matter? But, further, did not the Bishop know there was an excited state of feeling in the Convention? Was not the report of the committee shown to him before his illness, as furnishing a mode by which the subject might be brought before that body, and enabling him, by some timely interposition, to prevent an outbreak amongst its members? Did he not read it before its presentation? Did he express the slightest dissatisfaction with it? On the contrary, did he not make it a condition on which his Charge should be read to the Convention, that the report should *not be altered in the least*? Now, these things are believed in the Diocese, upon the authority of Presbyters who were there, and were members of the committee, and, if true, must we not conclude that the Bishop, at that time, did not think the report involved any error of principle, or excess of authority, and that this vice in it has been discovered by his subsequent investigations at Valle Crucis?

Again; a preamble and resolution were offered to the Convention, the former of which, after referring to the report of the committee, stating the opinions that the church no where requires the practice of auricular confession and private absolution, and, quoting an opinion of Bishop Hobart upon that practice, expresses the great satisfaction with which the Convention had heard the Bishop's Charge; and the resolution directs the publication of a thousand copies of the report, the Charge, and the preamble, for distribution. To this proceeding the Bishop in his Pastoral objects, (page 11,) declaring the preamble to strike, "in principle, at the very foundations of truth and order." Now, this preamble was first introduced with the resolution in a different form from that in which it appears on the Journal, and was in that form adopted. At a subsequent day it was altered to what it now is. Why was this done? Was it not at the instance of the Bishop? Was not the preamble seen by him—objected to by him—every amendment which he suggested adopted, and did he not declare himself satisfied with it in its corrected form? Did not the Convention, anxious to avoid giving him offence, or pain, substitute the amended for the original preamble? And is not the preamble, as it now stands on the Journal, word for word what the Bishop's amendment made it? If this be so, how can the Bishop feel authorized, after so far sanctioning what was done, now to denounce this preamble in such strong and almost bitter terms? Why did he not, at the time,

make known to the Convention his objections to the proceedings, if he then entertained them?

His health, he says, was feeble; but would it have required a greater exertion of mind to dictate a remonstrance to the Convention, than was necessary to suggest amendments of the preamble? And why should he desire to alter the form of that which he deemed altogether bad in substance, and grossly vicious in principle?

He who without prejudice or excitement shall examine the proceedings of the Salisbury Convention, will be struck with their moderation and forbearance; an anxiety at once to vindicate the Church from all suspicion of favouring Romish doctrine or practice, and an extreme care to avoid doing any thing which might hurt the official dignity, or wound the personal feelings of the Bishop; and will find himself as much at a loss to discover in these proceedings any assumption of authority, or violation of principle, as to find the Bishop's doctrine of the necessity of priestly absolution, in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church.

The Bishop refers to the imperfect representation of the^d diocese in the Convention, there being but thirteen out of the forty-eight parishes assessed, which had delegates present. Forty-eight parishes *assessed!* and what evidence does this furnish of the sense of the Church? Of these forty-eight, twenty-four are assessed for the Bishop's salary and contingent fund, at sums of fifteen dollars and under, being, with one or two exceptions, mere missionary stations, where the

Church is seeking to gain a foothold. Only twenty-eight parishes chose delegates, and thirteen of these were represented; a representation quite equal to that found generally in attendance on our Diocesan Conventions. There were present, twenty-two clergymen, out of thirty-eight entitled to seats, and four of the sixteen absentees are known to me to have been totally opposed to the Bishop's doctrine and proceedings. But what would the Bishop imply? that the lay delegates did not present a true exhibition of the sense of the diocese? that any unrepresented parish was prepared to support his doctrine? Let him not be deceived. He will not hear at Valle Crucis the voice of the laymen of his charge. Never, he may be assured, were any people more united, than are we in all sections and parishes of the diocese. Had the representation in the Convention been greater, the number voting would indeed have been increased, but the unanimity would have been the same.

So much for the doings in the Salisbury Convention, to which the Bishop objects.

But in order to understand fully the grounds of agitation and alarm which have existed, and do exist in the Diocese, and to ascertain whether we have since the publication of the Bishop's last Pastoral, less or more reason for that agitation and alarm, than we had before the meeting of the Convention, we must consider the claim set up by the Bishop to high and overruling authority in his Diocese.

In commencing the discussion upon his own au-

thority, he states that he did not covet the office, that it was in fact forced upon him against his will, and in a note that he was "unanimously elected after repeated unsuccessful trials to induce others to accept." (page 19.) To what purpose this is alleged I do not perceive, nor what connexion it has with his Episcopal powers, but the statement is somewhat inaccurate, and therefore should be corrected. The facts as to his election, I believe, are these; so at least they were, on all hands, understood to be, at the time and place when and where the election was made. In the meeting of the clergy to agree on a person to be nominated, two highly respectable presbyters were named. Between them the clergy were divided, and being unwilling to make a nomination other than unanimous, it was suggested by one of their number that Mr. Ives, known only, it is believed, to the clergyman who named him, should be selected. This suggestion was adopted, but, after all, the vote of the clergy in Convention was not unanimous, for one Presbyterian voted against the nomination. The statement that repeated unsuccessful trials had been made to induce others to accept, is, I think, certainly incorrect. It was understood at the time, that both the Presbyters above referred to, had been previously addressed upon the subject, and there was no reason to doubt that either would have accepted. The office may have been "forced upon the Bishop against his will," though we knew not and heard not at the time of any compulsion; but surely his coming against his will to take

charge of us can make no difference in his Episcopal powers. The "nolo Episcopari," which in the olden time was often heard, and sometimes silenced by a little gentle coercion, was never thought to confer additional authority upon the *reluctant* Prelate. We may, therefore, dismiss this matter, and proceed to consider the extent of the Bishop's powers, and the validity of his claims upon the true grounds on which these rest. The Bishop asserts for himself a controlling authority over doctrine, discipline, and worship, within his diocese, and this authority I understand him to claim as intrusted by Almighty God to him alone: (page 19,) he declares himself "alone responsible to the church at large for its doctrine, discipline, and worship." Now, if there be in the diocese any authority superior to, or co-ordinate with his, any authority which, in any case, may resist his judgment, or in any respect act independently of his will regarding doctrine, discipline, or worship, it is plain that he cannot be "*alone* responsible" therefor: and therefore it follows that the authority claimed by him, as it admits no superior, no co-ordinate, but demands submission from all within his diocese without exception of person or case, must of necessity be supreme and absolute. Now by what process does the Bishop vindicate this claim, and centre in himself the whole undivided authority over religion within his diocese? He first excludes from any the least show of judgment over faith, doctrine, or discipline, the entire body of the laity, whether considered as individuals, congregations,

or delegates in Convention—laymen with their “leprous hands” unfit to be lifted to heaven with cries for mercy, being of course unworthy to touch the ark of doctrine, discipline, and worship. For this exclusion he relies upon the example of the English church, citing, in a note, (page 17,) Bishop Overall, to show that, according to her divines, “the right of definite judgment in matters of faith is to be given to synods of bishops and other learned ministers of the church.” Now, whatever may be held as matter of theory by Bishop Overall or any other English divine, what is and ever has been the undoubted matter of fact as to the condition of the English reformed church? Not one part of her service—not one of her Articles of Religion—nothing that belongs to her as a church, has been undertaken, completed, or established by the *sole* authority of her bishops and clergy. The first Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments in the time of King Edward, was set forth “by the common agreement and full consent both of the Parliament and the Convocations of Canterbury and York!” This book was revised in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. by commissioners appointed by those sovereigns respectively, and the last revision, in Charles II.’s time, was approved by Convocations, and confirmed by Parliament. In fact and in law the whole legislation of the church is subject to the control of the civil power. Convocation cannot assemble without the king’s writ, and when assembled cannot deliberate without his license, nor are the lay members

of the church bound by any caucus which have not received the sanction of Parliament. And what is well worthy of remark in this connexion is, that the English Prayer Book contains four distinct forms of prayer, with the order of King George the III., signifying his "will and pleasure" that they should be "annexed to the book of Common Prayer and Liturgy of the church of England," and on the authority of this royal order, have these forms held a place in the English Prayer Book for more than eighty years. English laymen are bound by nothing of doctrine, discipline, or worship, which has not received the approbation of their representatives in Parliament, unless the four forms of prayer above mentioned may be deemed an exception, and to these neither Convocation nor Parliament was asked to assent. But if English laymen were otherwise situated, what would that prove as to the condition of lay members of our church in what the Bishop justly calls "this land of freedom?" Why, just nothing at all! The venerable Bishop White maintained the right of laymen to representation in our church assemblies; first, on the ground that it was most agreeable to the earliest practice of the primitive church: secondly, because it was necessary *here* as an equivalent for the power of Parliament over church legislation in *England*, and thirdly, because our laity *would not submit* to be bound by laws adopted *without their consent*. Now what would Jewell have thought of the introduction of laymen into ecclesiastical assemblies? Would he have deemed

it wrong, injurious to religion, or inconsistent with the practice of the primitive church? Certainly he would not; for that godly and most learned man maintains the right of laymen to have a voice in church affairs, and to deliberate and determine on matters of faith. (Works, vol. VI., page 225 to 230, and 426 to 428.) Besides others, he quotes Pope Nicholas, who, writing to the Emperor Michael, admits the presence of former Emperors in Councils “when matter was moved touching the faith,” and assigns the reason in these words—“For faith is universal and common to all, and pertaineth not only unto priests, but also unto laymen, and generally and thoroughly to all Christians:” and St. Cyprian saying, “From my first entering into the bishopric, I have determined to do *nothing* by mine own authority without your advice, (being the priests and deacons,) and without *the consent of the people;*” and Jewell affirms that “the lay Prince in Council hath had authority not only to *consent* and agree unto others, but also to *define* and *determine*, and that in cases of religion, as by many evident examples may appear.” This lay right will of course be modified as to the manner of its exercise by the civil constitutions of different countries. Where state and church are united, it will be exercised by the supreme legislative power, whether vested in a king, in a parliament, or elsewhere. Where, as with us, church and state are not united, we, following the genius of our civil institutions, exert it through representatives chosen by the laity to protect their rights,

and disclose their judgment. Accordingly we find, in fact, that our Articles of Religion were established, and our Liturgy set forth, not by bishops alone, or by bishops and clergy, but by "the bishops, clergy, and laity" of the church, as any one who shall examine the Journals of the General Convention, and the ratifications in our Prayer Book will perceive; and the first Constitution of the church in the United States was formed by a Convention of clergy and laity, without the authority or presence of any bishop. How then stands the question of lay right? Our whole doctrine, discipline, worship, and legislation, have been established, set forth, enacted by the laity as well as and equally with the bishops and clergy. No alteration can be made in them or any of them by the united voice of all the bishops and clergy, without the consent of the laity freely given. The authority is co-ordinate and co-equal; how then shall it be said that the laity are excluded from all right of judgment in regard to those things which by their co-operation and consent were established, and without their co-operation and consent cannot, in the least degree, be altered.

Such an exclusion is inconsistent at once with our ecclesiastical constitution and with any supposition of wisdom in the Church. Shall we say that the laity in the house of clerical and lay delegates, are by the constitution empowered jointly and equally with the clergy to consider, debate, define, decide, and direct as to doctrine, discipline, and worship—that without them, nothing in respect to either has been, or can be, au-

thoritatively defined, decided, or directed; and yet, that they have no right to consider, to weigh, to judge of, what is taught respecting doctrine, discipline, or worship? If we say so, why? Not because they ought not, in the judgment of the church, to be intrusted with *power*, for that is by her fully conferred. Shall we then say that the church presumes them incapable from want of skill or integrity to do that wisely and honestly, upon whom, nevertheless, she confers the power of doing it? Are not the laity to prepare themselves, as well as they can, to understand the liturgy of the church as a body of doctrine, as well as a form of prayer and a rule of discipline? Or are their minds to be but blank sheets of paper on which the Bishop is, with his pastoral pen, to write, expunge, and rewrite what he pleases? When they assemble in General Convention with the clergy, and a question is moved, as to doctrine, discipline, or worship, on which the church empowers and expects them to decide, if already informed, may they not act upon that information? if not informed, may they not listen to the opinions of others, and follow that which best commends itself to their judgment? or must they, in either case, refer to their Bishop for that decision which he judges proper to be made? It is manifest that the church designed no such mockery, as would be the power to decide without the right to consider and to judge—that she holds no such low opinion of her laity as this would imply; but when she confers the power, she supposes the *capacity* to use it wisely, the *right*

to use it freely, and an interest in its *wise* and *free* use corresponding with that of her Bishops and clergy. The Pastoral (p. 17,) alleges as a "safe maxim" of the church, that "*she gives no authority where she exacts no responsibility,*" and argues that as she exacts no responsibility from the laity, touching doctrine, discipline, or worship, she "*precludes the judgment of the laity from all questions involving these things,*" and further, because she prescribes to a "Diocesan Convention, *as such*, no duty, takes no pledge of fidelity, and exacts no responsibility," touching these subjects, therefore a Diocesan Convention is, by the same safe maxim, likewise excluded. Where the Bishop found this "maxim" of the church, I do not know; but let that pass, and let us assume it to be her maxim: what follows? why clearly, if the Bishop's reasoning be just, this follows: that not only her laity, not only her Diocesan Convention, *as such*, but her Bishops, clergy, and laity in General Convention assembled are, by her, precluded from all judgment in questions of doctrine, discipline, and worship. For what pledges does the church take, what responsibility does she exact from clerical and lay delegates, *as such*? What from the House of Bishops, *as such*? Why, just none at all. Then the result I have stated is, upon the maxims quoted and applied by the Bishop, an inevitable conclusion. Thus: where the church takes no pledge and exacts no responsibility, she gives no authority. But she takes no pledge and exacts no responsibility respecting doctrine, discipline, or worship, from the Bishops, clergy,

or laity, as members of a General Convention. Therefore, she gives to them, as such members, no authority over these things. But a general convention, as we know, has such authority; and, therefore, the Bishop's argument, by proving too much, is seen to prove nothing; and, therefore, also, the maxim quoted is not that of the church, or else the Bishop has applied it in a manner not designed by her.

The Bishop, I think, has confounded two things, which are distinct and different from each other. The ministerial powers confided by the church—for example, to preach, to celebrate the sacraments, and administer discipline—are to be executed not at the discretion and according to the will of the ministers, but according to her law and her doctrine; therefore, she “takes a pledge” that his ministrations shall be according to *her* articles of religion, *her* forms of worship, and *her* rules of discipline—and for a breach of this pledge she “exact a responsibility.” But what pledge, I pray, could she take, what responsibility exact, from a member of the General Convention, *as such*, he having, in that character, no ministerial function to discharge? Shall it be a pledge that he will not propose or support a repeal of any of her canons—that he will not agree to any purposed alteration of her rubrics, prayers, or articles? And suppose such pledge given, what responsibility can the church exact in case of its violation? Such a pledge would involve at once the grossest absurdity and highest inconvenience—it would fix an unalterable character upon the

whole legislation of the church, and make the triennial meetings of the Convention an idle show. Yet this is the only pledge which can be imagined for a member of the General Convention. Every layman, and no less every clergyman and every Bishop, is bound by whatever the church has established, until altered by competent authority; but neither is precluded from seeking to obtain such alteration by constitutional means, or from forming and expressing an opinion that any alteration ought to be made; and, by consequence, neither is precluded from examining what is the interpretation of any part of the law or doctrine of the church, adopted by her ministers—to the end, that such interpretation, if erroneous, may, by proper means, be disallowed—or if right, may be supported—or that if the thing, rightly interpreted, be in itself improper, it may be abolished. The error runs through the Bishop's whole argument, of confounding ministerial powers, under the law, with legislative powers over the law. In regard to the former, a particular pledge is properly required—in regard to the latter, it would be mischievous and absurd. Apart from their ministerial functions, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are under the same pledge as the laity,—the baptismal vow,—and to that, and that only, the church trusts for fidelity to her interests in the exercise of all powers confided to them, which belong not to their ministerial character; and her delegates are under no responsibility, except to God and their constituents. Indeed, upon a careful review of our whole ecclesiastical system, it will ap-

pear that the church has been less influenced by the maxims quoted by the Bishop than by a rule commended by Jewell, "as agreeable to reason:" that *what toucheth all, must be allowed by all.*

But the Bishop having precluded all judgments of the laity, precludes also the judgments of the clergy in regard to doctrine, discipline and worship. It is true that where he speaks of the sacred instrumentality in the Diocese, and elsewhere in the Pastoral, he seems to allow somewhat to the clergy; yet when he comes to treat of his own authority as Bishop, he claims this *whole matter*, as confided to him *alone* by ALMIGHTY GOD; for it he holds himself *alone* responsible, and, therefore, necessarily claims, as we have seen, a power supreme and absolute within his Diocese. He denies to the clergy assembled in Convention and acting either with or without their lay brethren, any authority over these matters—any right to pronounce their judgment upon false doctrines, vicious practices, or other evils in the Diocese, or even to declare the existence of such things, unless they appear in the parochial reports, after these have been presented to him, expurgated by him, and in such form, as he pleases, submitted to the Convention. He says, indeed, that they may talk to him on such subjects, and even venture to expostulate with him; but if he should, notwithstanding, persevere in disseminating even the most heretical doctrines—Socinianism, for instance—or in approving the use of the most objectionable prayers—for example, prayers to the Virgin or the Saints—he

warns them against any attempt, singly or by concert, "to thwart his views"—"to embarrass his labours"—or "to intimidate him," by what he calls "unauthorized, oppressive, and irresponsible *Conventional* acts,"—warns them against such an attempt, under the penalty of being brought to trial for the violation of a Canon of Chalcedon! Their only course, under such circumstances, is to sit by, fold their hands, and witness the preaching of heresy, the introduction of Romish prayers, and the degradation of the church, until they can get the Convention to present, and the house of Bishops to try, convict, and degrade the Bishop; and even this remedy, it seems, they hold subject to the will of the Bishop; for, if the proposal to impeach be introduced, he may, if he thinks proper, refuse as presiding officer to put the question to the Convention! Now, what material difference is there between what is here claimed for himself by the Bishop, and what is claimed by ultra-Romish writers for the Pope? Jewell thus states their claim: "That which the Pope approves or disapproves, we ought to approve or disapprove likewise." And again: "It is not lawful for any man to disallow that which the Pope approves. I know not what parasite it is, who shamelessly saith, that 'though all the world should be of one opinion against the Pope, yet it seems to me that the Pope's opinion must be maintained.'" (Letter to Scipio on the Council of Trent.) The difference in the two cases is found only in the extent of the Dioceses; that of the Pope is the World, that of

our Bishop is only North Carolina. Within his Diocese each is supreme over doctrine, discipline and worship, and "none must disallow what he approves." It is true, the Bishop admits he may be tried and deposed; but, that is by an authority exterior to his Diocese. This the Pope denies of himself; for there can be no authority exterior to a Diocese which includes the whole world. Practically, this difference is not much, for we know that Popes have, in fact, been sometimes, though rarely, deposed, and we have no reason to think that the deposition of a Bishop will be of easy accomplishment.

The Bishop's objection to the consideration of doctrine, discipline and worship, by a Diocesan Convention, rests on a misapprehension of the origin of our ecclesiastical system. This system is well and fully explained by the Rev. Dr. Hawks, in his book on the "Constitution and Canons of the Church," (page 41 to 58,) from which, and from Bishop White's Memoirs, it is evident that, after the revolution, the churches in the several States were independent churches, having each in itself full power over doctrine, discipline and worship; that these, acting through conventions of lay and clerical members, chose delegates to meet together and form a union of the whole into one national church; that the entire power of the General Convention is derived from the union of the several churches thus formed; and, by necessary consequence, all powers not by them vested in the General Convention, remain in the churches of the several Dioceses. Now, these

churches once had all power. By what grant have they parted with it all and become so dependent upon the General Convention, that an authority from that body must be shown to enable them to exercise any power? I submit that this is not the situation of these Diocesan churches. On the contrary, that their Conventions can exercise every power which is not expressly, or by implication, granted to the General Convention or forbidden to them by the constitution of the Church in the United States. Hence, the Convention of each Diocese has *a duty* to discharge in watching over faith, worship and discipline, within its bounds; a *right* to declare its opinion whether there has been in any one, Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, an encroachment upon the Articles or Liturgy of the church, and a *power* to pass Canons (not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the church,) for giving to their opinion the force of law; and when the Bishop announces, in his last Pastoral, that, had he been present in the Convention, he would, as presiding officer of that body, have refused to put the question upon the preamble and resolution to which he objects; he seems to arrogate to himself an absolute power over the Convention. As *presiding officer* he is bound to submit to the judgment of the body, so far as to allow it to act, whatever weight he, *as Bishop*, may give to the action when completed. Besides, it should be recollected, that his being the presiding officer of the Convention depends solely on a provision in the Diocesan Constitution, and such a dictation, as he threatens,

once attempted and persevered in, might compel the Diocese, in order to protect its own rights, so to alter that Constitution, as to give the Convention another presiding officer.

The Bishop having quoted, as a warning to the Clergy, a canon of the Council of Chalcedon, gives a significant hint to the laity, that for them, also, there are other Canons—whether of Chalcedon he does not tell us—besides those of the American Church, to which they may be held amenable. For he says, (page 17,) “If, in a moral sense, they be not open and notorious evil doers, or have not done any wrong to their neighbour by word or deed, there is no canonical right except we go *beyond the canon law of the American Church*, to which *some* desire to restrict us, even to repel them from the Holy Communion.” Go beyond the canon law of our own church! To which some desire to restrict us! Why, who ever heard of a right in any church to exercise discipline beyond the law of that church? Who, but the Bishop, sets up a right to go beyond that law? But this claim is a just and natural sequence of the sole authority to judge of doctrine, discipline and worship, in the Diocese. The Bishop does not desire to repeal any part of the legislation of the church, or to strike out any thing from her Articles and Liturgy; but *only* claims, within his Diocese, the sole right of interpretation thereof, and of making additions thereto!

Chillingworth, in his immortal work, has well said, “He that would assume an absolute lordship and

tyranny over any people, need not put himself to the trouble and difficulty of *abrogating* and *disannulling* the laws, made *to maintain the common liberty*; for he may frustrate their intent and compass his own design as well, if he can get the power and authority to *interpret them as he pleases*, and *add to them what he pleases*, and to have his *interpretations and additions stand for laws.*" Here is described at once the power claimed by the Bishop, its necessary tendency, and probable consequence. He has the sole responsibility for, and sole authority over the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church, within his Diocese; he is the supreme interpreter of the Articles and Liturgy; can add to her symbols of faith *a creed* which she has rejected, and declare it heresy to deny any part thereof; to her discipline, *an absolution* which she has formally expunged; to her *clerical institution*, a monastic order, surrounding himself by persons, bound to him by vows nowhere authorized by the church to be made or taken; may allow the reservation of the consecrated elements, in defiance of her rubric, which commands that they shall be immediately eaten and drunk; may send a penitentiary through the parishes to hear confessions, and "prescribe the rules and measures of penance," although the church knows no such officer, and allows no such function; may declare the church in schism, and dissuade members of another communion from entering hers; may, if he choose, in any thing and every thing, falsify the doctrine and Romanize the worship of the church, and

a Diocesan Convention, duly assembled, has no right to warn the Diocese against these things—no right to express an opinion that they violate the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church, and ought not to be allowed—no right, even through the report of a Committee of Clergymen, to take notice that such things exist at all!! This is the inevitable result of the teaching in the Pastoral—*result* do I say? It is in substance the very teaching itself. Nay, further. If the clergy, horror-stricken at such innovations, should unite in any measures which might tend to obstruct the Bishop's plans, or should aid or abet any expression of opinion thereupon by a "conventional act," they might find themselves on trial for conspiracy, before members of the order of the Holy Cross—be convicted under the canons of Chalcedon, and degraded from the ministry: while any unfortunate layman, in like case offending, might be in a summary manner excommunicated, under some canon law of England, or France, or Spain, or Italy.

I am not willing to believe that the Bishop intends us injury by this claim of authority. Nor do I suppose that he has carried out, in his own mind, that claim to its full and legitimate consequences. I doubt not that he believes himself justly entitled to what he has claimed, and is far from designing to make what he deems a bad use of it. On the contrary, I do him the justice to believe that he seeks our spiritual good as best to be promoted by implicit submission—by being to him the plastic clay in the hands of the

potter. But this submission we cannot make—this plastic clay we cannot become. We may not yield to the teachings of the Bishop higher reverence, or allow them to possess greater authority than Jewell claims for the ancient Fathers of the church, or those Fathers claimed for themselves. Of them Jewell says—“They were witnesses unto the truth. They were worthy pillars and ornaments in the church of God. Yet may they not be compared with the word of God. We may not *build* upon them: we may not make them the *foundation* and *warrant of our conscience*: we may not put *our trust* in them: our trust is in the name of the Lord.” Again he says, “In this sort did Origen, and Augustine, and other doctors of the church, speak of themselves, and of theirs and the writings of others, that we should *so read* them and *credit* them as they *agreed* with the *word of God*. This kind of writing is to be read not with the necessity of believing them, but with a *liberty to judge of them*.” (Jewell’s *Treatise of the Holy Scriptures*.)

Upon the whole, I submit to the judgment of every Member of the Church whether we have not, in this Diocese, abundant cause for “great agitation and alarm;” whether powers are not asserted over us never before claimed in any Protestant Church, and utterly inconsistent with the rights of conscience; whether, in appearance at least, our Bishop does not incline strongly towards the opinions and practices of the Church of Rome; whether his doctrines and his claims fairly carried out will not establish a spiritual

lordship and tyranny over us, disannul, in effect, the laws made by our Church "to maintain the common liberty" both of clergy and laity, and establish in the Diocese an Episcopal despotism.

If there be this cause for alarm—if our rights be in danger—if the common liberty be threatened, we are neither stocks, nor stones, nor insensate brutes. We are men—freemen—free Protestant Episcopalians—quite as able to read and understand the Liturgy and Articles, the Constitution and Canons of the Church, as to read and understand the Bishop's Pastorals; and we must and will do what we can to assist and defend our endangered rights, and maintain our threatened liberty.

In Church, as in State, we are law-abiding men, we submit to all lawful authority, but we submit to no other. An undefined and unlimited power we know not in Church or State, and knowing none such, we need, in justice to ourselves, and in duty to the church, discredit and repel every claim to it. To our Bishops and other Clergy we render obedience when they act in accordance with the known law of the church—*of our church*—but then only. We treat their persons with respect and kindness, attend their ministrations with deference, and, we trust, with devout affections, and are thankful for a body of clergy of whom so many are pious, learned, diligent, and faithful. We willingly supply their temporal wants according to our ability, and feel ourselves far more than repaid by the spiritual good which we receive from them. These sentiments, united with a most affectionate personal

attachment, were truly felt, and freely and constantly manifested towards our Bishop by the laity of the Diocese, and by few, if any, more than by myself.

But our conscience and judgment we cannot yield in blind submission to any Bishop. We must stand by and for the church, our "true loving mother," as we have known her, and cannot consent to have her character changed by infusions from Rome or Oxford. We love her not only because she is the church of our fathers, but also and chiefly because her ministry is apostolic—because her theology is the doctrine of the Bible—because her Liturgy is full of "evangelical sentiments," "fervent devotions," and "majestic simplicity"—and because her discipline is the gentle and wholesome restraint of known rules adopted by common consent, a restraint as far removed from despotism on the one hand as from licentiousness on the other. Deprive her of these attributes, and we should love her no longer. We are not prepared to admit that any living man understands her principles better than did White, and Hobart, and Ravenscroft; and we utterly deny that any man has a right by importations from another church or country—Rome or England—ancient or modern—to add to the doctrine, discipline, or worship of her Liturgy, Articles, and Canons, any thing which she has thought proper to omit, to condemn thereby, or to discard therefrom.

On this position, let the Bishop be assured he will find the people of his Diocese standing as fearlessly and firmly as he will stand upon his doctrine of "the ne-

cessity of priestly absolution to the remission of sins." They will continue to join in the worship of the church according to the directions of the Prayer-Book—to hear with reverence the "declaration of absolution" made to the penitent and believing, not as though it were a "periodical sponge," but as Hobart taught it to be, "an edifying and consolatory part of public service;" will prepare themselves for the Holy Communion by self-examination and prayer to Almighty God, bewailing before *Him* their sins, letting "*Him alone*," as Hooker and Chrysostom advise, "see them at their confession," and deeming no confession to men necessary, except to those whom they may have injured; will resort to their minister or other godly man, only when, by such self-examination and prayer to God, they cannot obtain quietness of conscience, but require "further counsel and comfort;" and then, opening to him "their grief," and showing him "their trouble and doubt," (not confessing to him their mortal sins, one by one,) will seek at his hands, not absolution, but godly counsel and advice. Yea, though they should find themselves to be like the man mentioned by St. Luke, "full of leprosy," yet will they not be discouraged, but, like him, will cry, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" or, like David, "Forgive my sin, *for it is great*." And knowing from St. Paul that we have "a great High Priest," who, though he "is passed into the heavens," can yet be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," we will "come boldly unto the throne of grace," and through this one

Mediator between God and man—without the intervention of saints in heaven, or priests on earth—will trust “that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.”

This is the view concerning repentance, confession, and forgiveness which, in this Diocese, we believe the Scriptures have taught, and the Protestant Episcopal Church approves. And if we persevere in practising the duty thus taught and approved, we have an abiding and steadfast confidence, that, dying in the faith and communion of the church, we shall die also “in a reasonable, religious, and holy hope,” which will not be disappointed in the last great day, when we shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, each to give account of himself to God—and when the rule of judgment will be, not *what said the Bishop*, but *what said the LORD*.

Raleigh, N. C., October, 1849.

“I reckon not, my brother, that ye would have us *so* to read *your* books, as if they were written by the APOSTLES OR PROPHETS.”—ST. AUGUSTINE TO ST. HIEROM, quoted by JEWELL.

What is heresy? “Heresy is the *pertinacious* denial of some truth *certainly* revealed.”—REV. WM. PALMER in his Treatise on the Church.

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A LETTER

TO THE

BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA

ON THE SUBJECT OF

HIS LATE PASTORAL

ON THE SALISBURY CONVENTION;

BY THE

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

NEW-YORK:

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LETTER.

RT. REV. AND DEAR SIR:

With extreme reluctance, and after long, perhaps too long delay, I have determined on laying before you the following reply to your late Pastoral on the Salisbury Convention. Most gladly indeed would I have avoided this undertaking of a public defence against him who has the charge over me; but duty to myself and others with whom I am connected in this matter, forbids that we should not exculpate ourselves from the charges which, with the full force of your authority, and with so much earnestness, you have urged against us. From the accidental circumstance of being Chairman of the Committee whose acts are reprov'd, the unpleasant office of reply appears to devolve on me, and I must endeavor to fulfil the duty to the best of my ability.

Beside this defence, however, there are many points of your Pastoral and other writings, to which I would beg leave to call your attention as of more importance to us even, than our personal defence. In your late Pastoral especially, we find too many things calculated to excite again, and which have excited again, that

agitation and alarm which it was hoped the proceedings of the Salisbury Convention had effectually allayed; and I write in the hope you may relieve our minds from the difficulties with which they are yet embarrassed.

I. I begin with your charges against the Committee on the State of the Church.

1. You accuse the Committee, (pp. 7, 8,) of violating a Canon; by bringing an implied charge of guilt against the minority of the clergy, embracing the bishop.

2. You say, (p. 10,) "The bishop finds himself virtually arraigned for his teaching by a convention assembled in a remote part of his diocese—called with no general knowledge of the intention of a few alarmists." By which I can understand nothing else but that these few alarmists have entertained secretly and insidiously, and therefore dishonestly, the deliberate purpose of arraigning you at an imperfectly represented Convention.

3. Again (pp. 10, 11,) you declare, "The conclusion, in justice to them, is inevitable, that they believed these things either to have no real existence, or to come within that class of views and practices, about which clergymen may differ and still be faithful to the Church." Now, as you have declared that the Committee "passed an implied," but not on that account less oppressive censure upon that portion "of the clergy [the minority] with the bishop at their head," (p. 9 :) and again, (p. 23,) as you say, in reference to the report of the Committee:—"The charge upon a portion of our self-denying ministry is, that through carelessness or wantonness, or some other cause, doc-

trines have been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of the Church, &c ;” if we take these passages in connection with the one quoted above from page eleven, it must follow that you declare that the clergymen composing the Committee, have uttered against their brethren an accusation which they did not themselves believe, or in other words, that they have been guilty of a deliberate and injurious falsehood.

4. On page 23 you say, “ But this beam of light which God hath sent down to cheer our hard labors, is sought to be intercepted by the clouds of human passion.” Thus with human ire, unchristian passion of some sort, you charge us.

5. P. 24. You charge four of your clergy with preaching false doctrine, two of them with heresy, according to your own definition. The clergyman who is charged with preaching against baptismal regeneration was, I understand, not a member of the Committee ; whether any of the others are members of the Committee you have not told us ; if they are not, I would respectfully ask, if you think it quite just to cast abroad an accusation which may be fastened on the perfectly innocent, or perfectly unconscious ? If the accused do belong to the Committee, here is a most serious charge against two of them at least, of heresy, according to your own definition of the term.

6. In the end of the 21st page, and on the 22nd, with the note at the bottom of the latter, you charge us with combinations against you ; of exciting against you the popular mind ; of aiding and abetting unau-

thorized, oppressive and irresponsible conventional acts; of conspiracy; of banding together; of course, of criminal banding, for none other would be censurable; and for these acts, you tell us that by "the 18th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon, we should have been deposed;" thus giving us plain intimation that you think we deserve so severe a punishment. I have said you charged us with these offences; for not only the connection in which you have introduced them, point them to us, but a private letter to myself, in which you directly charge me and others with many of them, show for whom the enumeration of them was intended.

7. In page 55 you say that "it is easy to vociferate and insinuate general charges for effect;" plainly alluding to the Committee, and thus imputing to us noisy clamor for popular applause or favor.

8. In page 59 you cite a number of rubrics, and by the inquiry you make to each,—What clergyman and what priest does so and so, plainly intimate that no priest observes any of these rubrics; calling on each of us to declare, before God, whether we do observe them.

Now, Sir, these accusations against the Committee, of violating a canon of the diocese to insinuate charges against their brethren, although they disavow doing so; of not believing the truth of what they are said to insinuate; of being influenced in this matter by human passions; of vociferating and insinuating general charges for effect; of violating numerous rubrics; of conspiring and banding together against their bishop; and meriting for this, if

they had their just deserts, according to the Council of Chalcedon, deposition, are grave accusations. Beside, you accuse four of the clergy of false doctrine, and two of these of plain heresy, while three of the four, including those accused of heresy, may be of the Committee. These are serious charges. All these accusations are made by their bishop against clergymen whose reputation has been hitherto unsullied, who have never before been accused of heresy, of faction, or of falsehood. Most of them having served the Church for many years, with honor and acceptance at least; one of them, more advanced in life, and of longer standing in the ministry than yourself. Surely, Sir, if you thought reproof, severe reproof necessary for a supposed attack upon your doctrine; your reproof has been severe indeed. I am very unwilling, Sir, to believe that when you penned these charges you saw the full force of your expressions, the plain inferences which are to be drawn from the words you employ. The terms of kind intercourse on which you have lived with your clergy make me hope otherwise, but the charges are abroad to the world with the weight of your authority, and extension of your Pastoral; and unless encountered, are likely to affect the character of the clergy, and produce a false impression of the condition of the diocese.

Who will say, then, we are not bound by every consideration of duty to vindicate ourselves from these accusations; to call on you for the proof of them, and to convince you that they must be the offspring of false information, of groundless suspicion, or of both.

Before proceeding to this defence, it will be necessary, however, to point out some mistakes into which you have fallen, and to guard against some expressions in your Pastoral, likely, I think, to mislead your readers, and which at the same time have a decided bearing on the question.

1. In speaking of the Convention at Salisbury, you say, (p. 1.) "I am aware had you been duly represented;"—and again (p. 10.) you designate it as a "Convention assembled in a remote part of his diocese—called with no general knowledge of the intention of a few alarmists, representing only thirteen or fourteen parishes out of about fifty," &c. By which any one not acquainted with the usual representations of the diocese, might suppose the Salisbury Convention different in character from any others. I have here subjoined a synopsis of the different Conventions since 1841, from which it will easily appear, that the Salisbury Convention was as well represented as our Conventions usually are; and that the lay representation indeed, was fuller than that either of Newbern or Wilmington. Salisbury was appointed as the place of the meeting of the Convention just as other places generally are, and I would ask you, Sir, whether you would have preferred any other place to Salisbury, and especially whether you would have preferred Raleigh, where most probably, from its central and accessible position, the Convention would have been best attended; and whether you seriously believe, the result, in case of the Convention having been assembled at Raleigh, would have been at all more favorable to your supposed views than it was at Salisbury?

CLERGY.			PARISHES.			Lay persons present.	Year.	Place of holding Convention.
Canonically resident.	Entitled to seats.	Present at Convention.	Assessed.	Electing Delegates.	Represented in Conven'n.			
29	24	21	31	17	15	28	1842	Oxford.
30	29	20	31	15	10	21	1843	Edenton.
28	28	15	33	19	14	30	1844	Washington.
34	25	11	33	18	12	25	1845	Fayetteville.
34	32	24	36	26	20	33	1846	Raleigh.
29	28	20	40	20	12	24	1847	Newbern.
38	37	24	49	29	12	22	1848	Wilmington.
41	38	23	49	27	15	25	1849	Salisbury.

I have stated the number of parishes represented at Salisbury as 15, instead of 13, the recorded number ; since both the parishes of the Church of the Redemption, Lexington, and of St. Philip's, Mocksville, were represented ; the first by Dr. Wm. R. Holt, and the latter by Mr. J. A. Lillington. Dr. Holt's name appears on page 8 of the Journal of the Convention ; and Mr. Lillington, although his name does not appear on the journal, was well known to have taken great part in the debates. In addition to this, I must state, that in a communication I have received from Mr. Mordecai, a member of this parish, of a conversation he had held with you on the subject of the troubles of the diocese, he states : That he, and others who had been elected delegates to the Salisbury Convention, had designed to attend that Convention, but in consequence of the conversation with you, and especially from your own assurance that you would put all things right, he, as well as the other delegates, changed their purpose, and declined going to the Convention. His words are : "I observed I would see Mr. Badger

next day, and inform him of what had taken place, and I had no doubt he would be glad to get off. I saw Mr. Badger, and we all declined going to the Convention, relying on the bishop's assurance that he would set all things right." Thus, Sir, but for your interposition, (I do not mean improper interposition, for such I do not suppose it,) there would have been a full representation from this parish, making in all, 16 parishes represented, and 29 lay persons, who would, in that case, have been present at the Convention.

You say, (p. 9.) "The Church, at large, have a right to suppose, that this was an extreme measure, resorted to after every canonical means had failed ; while the truth is, no canonical means had been tried. No expostulation with the Bishop by the clerical members of the standing committee, nor by any other body of the clergy. No charges laid before him against any priest or deacon, as teaching heretical doctrines, or practising forbidden things. No complaint by any rector, that he had been annoyed by the practices of any neighboring priest, nor from any layman, against those of his pastor : no word, save in one solitary instance, of friendly counsel on the subject, except as sought by the Bishop himself, from any clergyman, or layman, in the diocese. But, after a quiet and apparently profitable visitation throughout the low country, in which all his sermons, which are now said to have produced excitement, were preached, with the almost universally avowed approbation of clergy and laity, the Bishop finds himself virtually arraigned for his teaching." I must suppose that in

these words, "no canonical means had been tried," you lay great stress on this idea; and mean that whatever else may have been done, it was not done according to the requisitions of one or more canons, for otherwise I must suppose that in some at least of the instances enumerated, you had forgotten what had actually occurred; and that in others you regarded indirect information of the difficulties occurring in the diocese, as of little consequence. When you say, "no canonical means had been tried," this must imply either that the means resorted to had been in opposition to a canon, or that the means required by a canon had been neglected. But what canon has any bearing on the subject unless it be the 4th of 1832, of Standing Committees; in the second section of which we find these words? "And they may meet of their own accord, and agreeably to their own rules, when they may be disposed to advise the bishop." Where in this canon, is any restriction which has been broken through; any injunction neglected? You say, "the clerical members of the Standing Committee, nor by any other body of the clergy." Why the *clerical* members of the Standing Committee, and what other body of the clergy is there, to which any canon assigns or even intimates any such duty?

When you say then, "No expostulation with the Bishop by the clerical members of the Standing Committee," if you speak of them individually, I must beg leave to say your memory has not been faithful to you in this instance. The clerical members of the Standing Committee are the Rev. Messrs. Buxton,

Smedes and myself. What Mr. Buxton may have done, I know not, but Mr. Smedes has once or twice in my hearing, and often, as he assures me, declared to you his disapprobation of points of your teaching; and for myself, I can truly say that I have on many occasions, expressed my decided dissent from several of your opinions, as not in accordance with the teachings of this Church; and especially in regard to the doctrine of private confession and private absolution. In which, among other things, I have observed to you, that unless the General Convention should pass a canon affixing the severest penalties to betraying the secrets of the confessional, the attempt to carry out the system would probably be attended with very injurious consequences, in the occasionally unguarded betrayal of those secrets, and the scandal resulting from it. Again, you say, "no other body of clergy;" yet at least one other clergyman had remonstrated, if not expostulated with you. The Rev. Mr. Cheshire, in a letter, assures me that he asked you, when you were in Scotland Neck, in the parish of Trinity Church, not to preach the sermon on confession which you had preached in Tarborough. That you seemed quite indignant at his presumption, said he had no right to dictate to you what you were to preach. He declares he protested against the doctrine of your sermon.

You say, "no charge laid before you against any Priest, or Deacon, as teaching heretical doctrine or practising forbidden things." If a charge of this sort was not made to you directly, it was so made that you arrived at the knowledge of it, for you say (p. 24,

in a note,) "some expressions in a little manual, at Valle Crucis, were objected to;" now these *expressions* as you term them, were an address to the Virgin in the form used in books of Romish devotion, and a prayer to guardian angels. Whether, sir, you would term the putting such kind of devotions in the hands of boys who had been placed under the guardianship of the Church, heretical teaching, I cannot say, but most certainly it is opposed to the teaching of our Church, and is a practising of forbidden things. Again: "No complaint by any layman against the practices of his pastor." If a complaint were not made to you *formally*, as I believe it was not, you yet knew, before the Convention, that the practices of a rector in St. Peter's Church, Washington, had been complained of; that great agitation had existed in that parish, and that you had taken notice of the disturbances by addressing a public letter, through the 'Banner of the Cross,' to a prominent member of the congregation. By this remark, I hope it will be clearly understood, that I do not undertake to pass any opinion on the merits of the case; to say whether the rector or those of the congregation who complained of his proceedings, were right. I speak Sir, but of facts, as known to you. Again: "No word, save in one solitary instance, of friendly counsel on the subject, except as sought by the Bishop himself, from any clergyman or layman in the diocese." When you say "on the subject," I suppose you mean the subject of agitation. Now, in Raleigh you had full notice of this subject from the Rev. Mr. Smedes, a clergyman, and from Mr. Mordecai, a layman, for

the latter has communicated to me in writing, a conversation he had with you on the very subject of the difficulties of the diocese, as I have before remarked. In this communication he spoke to you on the subject of your Pastoral on the Priestly Office, of one of your sermons he had heard, and of the difficulties at Washington, and informed you it was the intention of the lay delegates from Raleigh to bring the subject before the Convention.

That you had further notice of the existing difficulties, appears from the following communication from a brother clergyman of the highest reputation. The name of the clergyman is not given for reasons which your correct feelings will cause you to appreciate. You will know to whom I allude, when I state, that the conversation between you and him, took place on the Saturday preceding the Convention, and on your way to Pittsborough. I may further state the clergyman is ready to give his name if it be required. The conversation was in the following words as nearly as the clergyman can remember it : " After I had set before him, in the most serious and feeling manner, the dissatisfaction and alarm pervading the diocese on account of his new and peculiar views of Church doctrine and practice, and had warned him of the determination on the part of some of the members elect of the approaching Convention, to make it a subject of inquiry as soon as they got together, he replied with something of a smile at my unnecessary earnestness and uneasiness :—‘ Brother—I believe you are an honest and clever fellow, (or words very similar,) but do you know that you are

the sixth or seventh person that has told me the same thing? I do not fear any such results as present themselves to your mind. Whatever agitation and alarm may now exist in the diocese will soon pass away, and in six months you will be all of my way of thinking.' ”

You speak of your sermons “being preached with the almost universal approbation of the clergy and laity.” You certainly were deceived in thinking so; for most certainly this was not the case in Raleigh; most certainly not the case at Tarborough or Scotland Neck; most certainly not the case at Washington, so far as the laity were concerned.

You speak in a note to page 10, of there being but one, and that a sufficiently notorious exception. Here are three plain exceptions, which of the three, Sir, is the sufficiently notorious exception? and why should it alone be *sufficiently notorious*? Permit me to add, it was hardly possible for you to judge accurately of the effects of your preaching; you remain but a short time in each parish and neither clergyman nor layman would be eager to make known to you the beginnings of difficulties. And here, sir, I must seriously, though respectfully, except to the manner of your introducing persons either for censure, or in claiming them as approving of your doctrine and practices.

You tell us in the second note to page 10, that “the lay delegates from all the old parishes, who had heard the sermons, and were accustomed to represent the Convention, were, except in two instances, utterly opposed to the whole Salisbury proceeding.” Who

were these lay delegates? From what parishes? Were they present at the Convention? If present, their action at Convention showed no such opposition. If not present, why do you cite them? and how have you learned their opposition? In like manner, when you say, "I doubt not, *the greater part* (i. e. of the clergy,) are *now* united with me." On what evidence are you so persuaded? and what are the 'merely nominal' points of differences in which they dissent from you? I believe, sir, it is generally thought you are too sanguine in supposing persons judge favorably of your opinions, because from respect to your person and office, they may not like to express strongly in your presence their dissent. On the other hand, your accusations are—excuse me for saying so—too vague in regard to the individuals against whom they are directed. They thus may be applied according to the impression, or notion, or caprice, or inclination of the person reading your Pastoral; causing, very probably, those who are even in your own opinion entirely free from censure, liable to have it fixed on them; and preventing even the censured, through entire unconsciousness of deserving that censure, from making their defence. Thus you tell us of four clergymen who have preached false doctrine, but so far as your manner of expressing yourself is concerned, no one by reading the Pastoral can certainly discover whether you have yourself heard these sermons, or whether you received your information from others? from mere hearsay perhaps? Can it, Sir, be right, thus by such an undirected accusation against four of your presbyters, liable to be affixed to the innocent

as much as to those by you supposed guilty, to brand two of them with accusations of heresy, thus exposing them to all the obloquy belonging to such false teaching, and giving them no opportunity of defending themselves? Surely, Sir, if the committee had even fully designed that which you attribute to them, to insinuate charges against you; do you think their action more unkind, more injurious, to say the least of it, than yours? Possibly I may be one of these preachers of false doctrine, one of these heretics. If so, do me the justice to state what the heresy is? On what authority you make the accusation; the time and the circumstances. "*Accusatio crimen desiderat, rem ut definiat, hominem ut notet, argumento probet; teste confirmet.*" But you are so far from coming up to this requisition of Cicero, that you do not even mention the guilty person.

In pages 58 and 59, you tell us; I hesitate not to affirm "that no clergyman in this diocese is free from such a charge—the violation of the rubricks—and none less than the members of the Committee themselves." You thus become the accuser of every presbyter of your diocese; but how? You do not mark in what particulars we are each delinquent; but you cite a number of rubrics, with the demand, "What priest does so and so?" leaving it to be inferred, that every clergyman breaks every one of these rubrics. But to this particular, I shall have occasion to refer more fully hereafter.

In page 72, occurs another general accusation, coupled with an imputation of bad motives. "Many," you say, "who had seemed to be quickened to a more

earnest self-discipline, and aroused to efforts for higher spiritual life, were found to have gradually relapsed to their former state, and to be more anxious for ease and favor among men, than to gain, *through much tribulation, the eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God.*" Who, Sir, are these many? and why should you think they were more anxious for ease and favor among men, than to gain through much tribulation the eternal rest?

II. I come now to those parts of your pastoral which contain your censure of the report of the Committee on the State of the Church. Three subjects for inquiry here naturally present themselves.

1. Was the act of the Committee uncanonical?

2. What authority have the Committee for declaring there was agitation and alarm.

3. Did the Committee by their report *intend* to pass any censure on yourself or others?

1. Was the act of the Committee uncanonical? You tell us, (page 8,) "According to our canon law, they (the parochial reports) contain all the testimony in respect to the state of the Church, in the diocese, or in any part of it, which is either legal or trustworthy;" and in proof of this you refer us to the 5th canon of the diocese. I must here express my surprise, not only that you should have thought this canon violated by the action of the Committee, but that you should have supposed it had any reference to such action. The title of the canon is, "Concerning Parochial Registers and Reports;" and the object is declared to be to give effect to the 40th canon of the General Convention of 1808, repealed

by the 29th of 1832, "Of the duty of Ministers to keep a Register." Now in neither of these canons is one word said of a Committee on the state of the Church. The canon therefore confers on it no powers, assigns to it no duties, restricts it within no limits. How then, Sir, have you arrived at the conclusion, that the only testimony which the diocese in her canons allows in such a case, is a written account of the state of each parish, given by its minister in his parochial report? Why is it the *only* testimony? Because, as you urge, the 5th canon says, that it shall be the duty of each minister to report annually to the Bishop, among other things, a written account of the state of the parish, which reports shall be by the bishop communicated to the Convention, and read in their presence, in order to promote a general knowledge of the state of the Church. Therefore, you argue, that the Committee on the State of the Church could use no other source of information; from which the inference must be drawn that the word 'promote' does not mean to forward or advance, but to be the *sole source*. Nay, as not one word is said in the whole canon, of the Committee on the State of the Church, not one hint given of the existence of such a body; and the Convention is the body before whom these reports are laid; it follows, from your reasoning, that the parochial reports are the sole means of information, the sole testimony which the *Convention* can canonically have of the state of the Church, and that your own journal is a most uncanonical act. So are the reports of the Missionary and Standing Committees, and, indeed, so are all the other sources of in-

formation which have usually been presented to the Convention, in order to promote a general knowledge of the state of the Church.

But, Sir, how can this inference be possibly correct? Your own journal is always referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. According to you, how uncanonical an act is this! Pardon me for saying you appear to have had some doubts on this point yourself; you do not appear to have been perfectly satisfied with your own reasoning; for after declaring that the parochial reports are the only legal and trustworthy testimony, you add your own testimony to that of the parochial reports, and say, "the only persons allowed by canon to testify, viz: the parochial clergy and the bishop." *Before* it was the parochial reports solely, *now* it is the parochial clergy *and the bishop*. But let it be observed, that not one syllable is said in the canon respecting the bishop; and if every thing except what is mentioned by the canon be excluded, then the bishop's journal, and all sources of information which he can impart, are excluded, not merely from the committee, but from the Convention itself. Are you prepared for this conclusion?

But, secondly, so far from being correct is your opinion that the Committee on the State of the Church are restricted to the parochial reports, or even to them and your journal, or even to these and documentary evidence, that we find this Committee, on other occasions stating it as an implied part of their duty, to resort to other sources of information. In the Convention of 1839, the Rev. J. Singletary,

Chairman of the Committee, says, "They have examined the documents referred to them, and all other information within their reach." And again, in 1840, the Rev. Thos. Davis, as Chairman, reports, "The Committee have carefully examined into the state of the Church, as far as they have been enabled to do so from the documents referred to them, and other sources within their reach."

But these clergymen were held in no ordinary esteem in the diocese; sad for the diocese, that one has been lost to us by death, the other by removal.

According to this principle have committees on the State of the Church frequently acted. In 1839 there is notice of an action of the General Convention not mentioned in the parochial reports. In 1840 regret is expressed at the thin attendance of lay delegates, mentioned neither by the parochial clergy *nor the Bishop*. And again, it will be found on various occasions, the Committee on the State of the Church have carried out this principle.

The report of 1848 speaks of an infidel theory prevailing. Where do the parochial reports speak of such a theory in a single parish? In the same report we learn that it is understood that the religious house at Valle Crucis will henceforth devote its energies to the instruction of candidates. Where do the parochial reports state this? In the report of 1840 we find these words: "Finally, throughout the Church generally, and in this Convention especially, we are greeted with the cheering spectacle of unity of faith, harmony of love, the spirit of zeal and of a sound mind." If the Committee may not testify of agitation

and alarm, why should they testify of an opposite state, of harmony and peace ?

2. What authority had the Committee for stating there was agitation and alarm in the Diocese ?

From your manner of speaking on the point, it might be difficult at first to determine, whether you meant to deny the fact of agitation and alarm, or only the legality, the sufficiency, or propriety of the testimony upon which it is asserted. In the whole of your first head there is this obscurity, and at page 10 you speak of there being a few alarmists ; while on the other hand, in your charge to the clergy at the Convention, you acknowledge the existence both of excitement and agitation, on account of doctrines and practices. You not only do not deny the truth of the Committee's assertion, but yourself state that the Diocese has been agitated of late on a particular question.

On page 25, of your late Pastoral, you speak of the doctrine of the necessity of priestly absolution, having, "it is said called up around your Bishop, so many pale faces and fainting hearts." And again, page 69, you speak of the "charge now in busy circulation, of a concealed purpose on your part of bringing any foreign system or influence upon the diocese." Now as it can by no possibility of construction, be alleged that the Committee meant to charge or insinuate, that the doctrine of priestly absolution had called up around you pale faces and fainting hearts ; or that you had a concealed purpose of bringing in any foreign influence, it follows, without doubt, that you do recognize the existence of agitation and alarm ;

and that what you have said on this head, on page 7 and 8, was not designed to assail the truth of the assertion, but only the legality, or sufficiency, or *propriety* of the Committee's testimony. To this point I shall presently come.

The fact of agitation and alarm, indeed, was so certain, so manifest, as to be undeniable by any one, nor has it been denied. The report of the Committee was on that point received without hesitation, without one word of opposition, or even of comment.

You inquire, page 7, "But upon what testimony I would ask is this assertion made, i. e., of agitation and alarm?" I answer upon the testimony of the members of the Committee, speaking of facts too notorious to be denied, and therefore by no one denied, and assented to by yourself. But you argue, page 8, that to say that there *is* such agitation and alarm, when the parochial clergy, to a man, are silent on the subject, is to say that they have been culpably negligent in a canonically prescribed and commanded duty. To which I answer, that if your inference be true, then without any sort of question, some at least of the parochial clergy were culpably negligent; for there was agitation and alarm, at least in some parishes; there was in Christ's Church, Raleigh, as Mr. Mordecai's communication shows. There was in St. Peter's Church, Washington, as the difficulties existing between the rector and the congregation, known throughout the State, shows. There was agitation and alarm in the parishes of Calvary Church, Tarborough, and Trinity Church, Scotland Neck, as the Rev. Mr. Cheshire in his letter to me

shows; there was agitation at least, if not alarm, in Wilksborough, your own Journal shows, (p. 10 of Journal,) and in the same Journal, you yourself show that some minds had been disturbed by "*unfounded rumors*," as you consider them, "of doctrines taught and practice existing, not in accordance with the principles and usages of the Church." In none of the *reports* from these parishes, however, is there any notice of agitation and alarm. But did all these clergymen violate their duty, by not taking notice of this agitation and alarm? In making up the parochial reports is no discretion to be used? Suppose a slanderous story were afloat in the parish, which deeply affected the character of some eminent person in the community, perhaps the Bishop himself, and which produced at the time very great agitation and alarm; do you think it would be decent or proper, in a clergyman, to make such a story part of his parochial report? I know not how other clergymen may have viewed the subject, but I confess it did not once occur to my mind, that it would be a proper subject to introduce into my parochial report; I should have thought it very ill-advised to do so, lest I might thereby increase the agitation and alarm which already existed, and which, as will presently be seen, it was the object of the Committee to allay.

3. Did the Committee in their report intend to pass any censure on yourself or others? As soon as I thought of replying to your Pastoral, I proposed to the other members of the Committee the following inquiries.

1. Was it the intention of the Committee to make

or insinuate any charge in their report against the bishop or any one of the clergy?

2. During the sittings of the Convention, was the Bishop's name introduced in any act, or debate, with any disparaging reflections on himself or his doctrines? Was it introduced at all during his absence, till the delivery of his Charge?

3. Was the Bishop spoken of disparagingly in respect to his person or doctrine during the meetings of the Committee? Was he spoken of at all?

4. What did you understand to be the object of the Committee in making the report?—

Answer to these Inquiries by the Rev. Mr. McCrae :

1. "It was not my intention as a member of the Committee on the state of the Church, (nor was it, I believe, the intention of any member thereof,) to make or insinuate any charge against the Bishop or any of the clergy, in their report to the Convention.

2. I did not hear, during the sittings of the Convention, the Bishop's name introduced in any shape or way, with any disparaging reflections either on himself or his doctrine. Nor was it introduced at all till the delivery of his Charge.

3. The Bishop was not spoken of disparagingly either as regards his person or doctrines during the meetings of the Committee. I have no recollection that he was spoken of at all.¹

4. I understood the intention of the Committee in making their report to be this,—to assure the Church at large of the adherence of the greater part of the clergy in the diocese to the doctrine and worship of the Church as it exists.

I showed the Bishop the report of the Committee on the state of the Church; and he expressed not the slightest disapprobation of its contents. (Dr. Drane was also present.)

I might go on to say that when the Bishop delivered me his Charge to read to the Convention, it was upon *this condition, and this alone*, (the italics are Mr. McCrae's,) that the report of the Committee on the state of the Church should remain unaltered—and that no debate should be suffered to take place in regard to his Charge. If the report had been altered, or had any debate arisen on the Charge, then I was instructed to withdraw it; not without. To this Mr. Smedes will also testify." *

The answer of the Rev. Mr. Huske, Morganton.

1. As far as I know it was not. In regard to myself, personally, I can say, that if I had thought such was the intention of the report, I should have dissented from it.

2. I do not remember that the Bishop's name was introduced at all before his Charge. Certainly not as I heard with any disparaging reflections on himself or his doctrine.

3. I do not remember that the Bishop was spoken of at all in the Committee. I will state my recollection of what occurred. After settling the statistical portion of the report, the question was asked by yourself, I think, whether the matters which were discussed privately among the members of the Convention, relating to alleged departures from the

* The Rev. Mr. Smedes, on showing him Mr. McCrae's letter, has assented to the truth of the above statement.

doctrines of the Church, should be spoken of in the report. Upon this, the members of the Committee severally assented to the propriety of making some allusion to those matters. This is all that occurred so far as I recollect.

4. I supposed that their object was, inasmuch as they were a Committee on *the State of the Church*, to state facts of deep interest to the Church at large, and to give assurance of general fidelity to the Church among the clergy, in order to quiet excitement ; instead of throwing odium upon the Bishop or any of their brethren.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, that at that time, so far from intending by assent to that report, to *sit in judgment* upon the doctrine of the Bishop, or the doctrine or character of any of the clergy, I was not willing to express even a private opinion ; I wanted to hear facts, if there were any. But I do not see why a general affirmation, accompanied with an express disclaimer of intention to judge any one, such as that in the report, should be considered improper. The truth is, knowing the strong feeling among certain members of the Convention, I was afraid there would be intemperate resolutions introduced, and was therefore much in hopes, if the Committee on the State of the Church should notice the subject in a proper spirit, it might prevent hasty action in Convention.

Answer by the Rev. Dr. Drane.

To Question 1.—No. The Committee were, I believe, unanimous in the opinion that this was not

our business, and the report itself shows that it was studiously avoided.

To Question 2.—It was not so far as I heard or believed.

To Question 3.—No. It was not.

To Question 4.—It was believed by the Committee that an impression was extensively prevalent in the diocese, that many of the clergy were inclined to favor the introduction of Puseyitish or Popish doctrines and practices; and that this impression, if suffered to go uncorrected, would injure the influence of the clergy and prove disastrous to the best interests of the Church. Acting as a Committee on the state of the Church, and with indubitable evidence before us of agitation and alarm among the members, we felt it to be our duty to note this state of things; and with the view of allaying excitement and restoring tranquillity, we felt ourselves imperiously called upon to assure the diocese, that in our belief, the clergy as a body, were totally opposed to the introduction of any doctrines or practices not sanctioned by the standards of the Church. This, at least, was my own view of the object of the report, and I believe it was substantially the view of every other member of the Committee.

Answer by the Rev. Mr. Forbes.

To Question 1.—The intention of the Committee was to assure the members of the Church, that although there might be some in the diocese, who were teaching and practising these customs; yet the far greater part of the clergy were “opposed, &c.,” as

the report expresses it. When I say "might be," I mean that the determining of this point was not within the province of the Committee.

To Question 2.—To this I answer, No! not so far as I can recollect, nor was it introduced at all before the delivery of his Charge, to be the subject of remark or discussion, even if it were mentioned at all, and I do not remember hearing it.

To Question 3.—I think it was; for it would have been strange, if in speaking of the affairs of the Church, the name of the Bishop, whose report we had of his duties, should not have been even mentioned: but as to the main point of the question, "Was he spoken disparagingly of as regards his person or doctrine, &c." No, not in my opinion.

To Question 4.—I understood it to be the sole object of the Committee to produce quietness and peace by assuring the diocese at large that there was no danger that the Church would be united or even assimilated to the Romish Communion.

With respect to the Rev. Mr. Forbes, candor requires me here to state that his notion of the report, as far as I have understood and been able to condense the substance of his communication to me, in explanation of his answer to the first question, is much stronger than that of the other members of the Committee.

His view is, that although the *object* of the *Committee* was not to *accuse* any one of practices or doctrines contrary [to the teaching of the Church, but to allay agitation, yet, as far as he was concerned, he wished that from the report of the Committee, the

inference should be drawn that such doctrines had been taught and such practices had existed.

From these answers, the following conclusions, must, it appears to me, be most certainly drawn. First, that there was no set, deliberate purpose on the part of the *Committee* as a body, to bring forward or insinuate charges against any one.

Mr. Forbes differs indeed from the rest of the Committee on two points, the mention of your name during the meetings of the Committee, and his own peculiar views on the bearing which he wished the report to have on the aberrations in doctrine and practice, supposed by many in the diocese to exist, and occasioning agitation and alarm. But the mention of your name is connected by Mr. Forbes with your Journal, and not with the report of the Committee. This may have been the case, though I have no recollection of even such mention of your name. But certainly, most contrary to fact was the information you must have received, and on which doubtless you rested your assertion, (p. 9,) "that both in Convention and in the Committee, you were named as the chief offender." For who could know any thing of what was done during the meetings of the Committee, but a member of the Committee. Now it is most certain no member of the Committee could have told you so; judge therefore yourself, Sir, what little foundation your informer could have had for what he told you. It also appears that there could have been no regular, formed plan discussed and agreed upon by the Committee, of charging any one, or even insinuating a charge against any one. That

unless Mr. Forbes be an exception, it was not the purpose of any one individually to do so. For I fully agree with the rest of the Committee on this point.

Secondly, It is also most manifest that you were not spoken of in the *Convention* as the chief offender; and that whoever told you so, did not tell you the truth. Indeed, how should you have been spoken of? what was there to call up the mention of your name, previous to the delivery of your Charge? That Charge was received without one word of dissent. Why then should you have been spoken of as the chief offender? It is therefore so far from being notorious that you *were* named as the chief offender in Convention and Committee, that there is (if the word of such men as constituted the Committee can be relied on) most unquestionable evidence to the direct contrary.

But what then was the object of the Committee? It is easily stated. Great agitation and alarm existed in the diocese. Some of the Committee had witnessed this in their own parishes; and had heard of it in others. The apprehension also began to be entertained, and was expressed, that many of the clergy were fast inclining towards Romanizing views. To allay this excitement, to remove this impression, was the object of the Committee. Was it not a lawful object? Was it not a proper object? Was it not a *necessary duty*? And how could this object be accomplished, this duty be performed, so well or indeed at all, unless by such a report? I have heard the report censured, but assuredly not for crimina-

tion direct or implied, not for severity, not for illegality, not for injustice—(*you* are the first person I have heard to do this)—but for unnecessary *moderation*. Perhaps there may have been something of this unnecessary moderation, for perhaps the Committee might have declared the character of the supposed erroneous doctrine and irregular practices, but so studious were they to avoid any thing like crimination, that they mentioned these things, in the most general terms possible. Let me add one occurrence to show what was the feeling of the Committee on this subject. After the report was acted on and passed by the Committee, but before it was presented to the Convention, the Rev. Mr. Huske came to me and observed, he thought there was one expression which might appear to reflect on the Society of the Holy Cross. The concluding part of the report was originally worded in the following manner: The Committee are *happy to say* they have assurance, &c. He observed that he thought the words “happy to say,” seemed to imply condemnation of the Society, and might be so construed. I answered, they might be so construed; that I would therefore call the Committee together and propose to them their omission. This was done, and with unanimous consent the words were stricken out. Mr. Huske, in a letter to me, thus states his remembrance of the transaction. His words are: “I thought this (the expression *are happy*) implied opposition to the Society, which although I have always felt it, I did not think should be expressed on that occasion.” Considering what you represent the Society to have been, the Com-

mittee, if not with propriety, might at least with *truth*, have declared that they were happy to be assured of its dissolution.

But you ask, by what authority do they touch them, (i. e. these errors in doctrine, and irregularities in practice,) at all? By what authority do they indirectly define them and assert their existence in an attempted exculpation of the far greater part; and hence in an implied charge of guilt against the minority of the clergy, embracing the Bishop of the diocese?

To these questions the answer is very easy. The object of the Committee was not to accuse any one, nor to charge, nor to insinuate a charge against any one. As a Committee on the state of the Church, they considered it their bounden duty to take notice of the difficulties, the agitation, and the alarm, existing in the diocese, for the purpose, if possible, of allaying that agitation and alarm, on sufficient and just grounds, namely, the adherence of the clergy generally to the doctrines and practices of the Church.

But why, it may be asked, did not the Committee include all the clergy? They did not, because they could not. It was generally believed by most of the members of the Committee, I do not suppose I am going too far in saying, by all the members of the Committee, that the doctrines and practices of the Church had been departed from. Whether this belief was well founded, is another matter, but unquestionably it did exist, and if in doing their duty by taking notice of the alarm, and endeavoring to

allay it, the minds of the community were directed to certain persons, this could not be avoided. What they were bound to do, they were bound to do truthfully ; and if such consequences resulted, it was not the fault of the Committee. The distinction ought clearly to be observed between the intention of the Committee and the consequences resulting from their action. If it was the duty of the Committee to take notice of the agitation and alarm in the diocese, and of the supposed causes thereof, for the purpose of allaying this agitation and alarm ; if in the manner of discharging their duty they acted with all proper reserve ; if they violated no law of the Church ; no justly required respect towards yourself, or courtesy towards their brethren ; but if at the same time, owing to circumstances which the Committee could not control, inferences unfavorable to any persons were drawn by others, surely this ought not to be imputed to the Committee as their fault.

Suppose the teachings of your Pastoral of the Priestly Office, and your sermons, to have not been in accordance with the teachings of the Church ; the Committee could not say they were ; or suppose your teaching to have been misunderstood—(and if not opposed to the teaching of the Church, how liable it is to be misunderstood, will appear from the answers already made to it by clear and strong-minded men.) Suppose the Committee, or even a portion of the Committee, to have believed your teaching erroneous, though it were in reality not so ; while they are bound studiously to avoid pronouncing an opinion against, could they pronounce in favor of such teaching ?

But let it be observed, this agitation and alarm had been excited by other causes than the preaching of your sermons, or the publication of your Pastoral.

Remarks have been made by you in public and private, misunderstood, if you please, but so understood as to create unfavorable impressions of your attachment to this Church, our branch of the Catholic Church—impressions were abroad of teachings and practices at Valle Crucis, by no means in accordance with the doctrines and requirements of the Church—(subsequent disclosures have proved that these impressions were too well founded)—reports were afloat of practices and teaching in other quarters, of the same faulty character, which may have been misunderstood. All these had produced their effects on the public mind. To what extent there was adequate cause for these effects—whether the apprehensions entertained of Romanizing tendencies in some of the clergy, were justly entertained, or to what degree justly entertained, I do not here undertake to determine. But the effects *were* produced ; the apprehensions *were* entertained ; and the Committee, as a Committee on the State of the Church, believing it to be their duty, wished to allay this apprehension, so far as in truth they could. I ask what law did they violate ? What ties of fellowship did they break ? What lawful authority did they resist ? None : they did but their duty, and for the discharge of this duty, why should they be so censured ? The Committee could not declare that there was no ground for this agitation and alarm, for the conviction on the minds of many, as far as I know of all of them, was strong, that there was ground for agitation and

alarm. They could not declare that there was no clergyman in the diocese who had never preached doctrines not in accordance with the doctrines of the Church, had never introduced ceremonies unauthorized by this Church, or, in plain violation of its rubrics. But with respect to the far greater part of the clergy, they could not discover in a free conversation with their brethren at the Convention, that there was any reason to suspect them of a departure from the doctrines and practices of the Church; and the Committee, therefore, in coming together, had very little else to do, but to propose what they thought would be sufficient to allay excitement and remove false impressions; and I have no recollection that during the meetings of the Committee, there was any discussion of the merits or demerits of any of the brethren.

You ask, (p. 10,) "what evidence had the greater part of the clergy given of their peculiar and exemplary fidelity?" *Peculiar and exemplary fidelity* are words entirely your own, and pardon me for saying, have the appearance of sarcasm. But the Committee have claimed for their brethren no such *peculiar and exemplary fidelity*, but only such adherence to the doctrines of the Church to which they belong, as was to be expected from them. How truly the Committee have represented their brethren, your own acts will show. "You have cast your thoughts back," you say, "over the last year, and you found four sermons objected to." Whether justly objected to; whether by mere rumor; whether the preachers of the sermons objected to, had any opportunity of defending themselves; whether you believed the objections well

founded ; whether yourself had heard any of the sermons ; whether, after all, these objections were anything more than *επὶ πτεροεντα*, to which no sort of credit was to be given, you do not tell us. But let us admit the charge to be most indubitably well-founded. Then to these four let us suppose there might possibly be three or four more whose teachings and practices have been of a Romanizing character ; and still you have the far greater part of the clergy, against whom no imputation of false doctrine lies.

You tell us (p. 10) the Convention at Salisbury "was called with no general knowledge of the intention of a few alarmists." Who, may I ask, are these alarmists ? Do you mean the members of the Committee, and do you attribute to them a set purpose, a long formed and deliberate intention, entertained at least a year before the Salisbury Convention, of insinuating charges against you ? If so, this is a heavy accusation, but I confidently say you have *no* proof of it. What combined intention could be formed, at so remote a period, by any body of alarmists, but especially by the Committee ? Did not *you* appoint the Committee ? Those alarmists live remote from each other ; what evidence is there that they ever corresponded on any subject, much less on the disturbances in the diocese ; and as to any bandings or conspiracies among us, every member of the Committee not only denies being engaged in any such, but denies any knowledge of any such.

And now Sir, I beseech you, either to exculpate us from these heavy charges, or to show which of us, and in what aspect any one of us, and especially

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which one, if any, of the Committee on the State of the Church, has endeavored to thwart your views illegally; to embarrass your official labors by any combination among ourselves or with the clergy; or to intimidate or coerce you, by exciting against you the popular mind—lending a willing ear to exaggerated statements, and giving publicity to confidential, desultory, and unguarded conversations, and by aiding and abetting unauthorized, oppressive, and irresponsible conventional acts. Which of us, and in what aspect, especially which of the Committee on the State of the Church, have banded together, or conspired, or framed any evil designs against you? And, as unfortunately I have been accidentally far more prominent on this occasion than was at all my desire, I call upon you to say whether, from your knowledge, or from any sort of credible testimony, I have ever been factiously or illegally opposed to you; whether I have by any act or words, in any way, or at any time, endeavored to combine at all with others against you, or been privy to any combinations against you? Whether I have ever shown any hostility to your person, or uncanonical or unclerical opposition to your authority?

III. I come now to that portion of your Pastoral which relates to the preamble to the resolution for publishing the Report of the Committee and your Charge.

1. For myself, I must observe, that I do not think a Diocesan Convention the proper body to determine what is the faith of the Church, nor do I undertake to defend entirely the preamble to which you so strongly object; not, however, I must say, generally speaking, for the reasons you assign.

Not to enter into the inquiry of what were originally and justly the powers of diocesan conventions in regard to declaring what is the faith of this Church, the following remarks may deserve consideration. The strictness with which our Church in the United States has, in the VIIIth Article of the Constitution, guarded against any haste in changing, adding to, or what in principle is the same, interpreting the doctrines of the Church, and the total absence of any such restrictions from any articles or canons of any diocese (so far as I am aware) where, clearly, such restrictions would be most needed, show, I think, indubitably, that every diocese has virtually, if not expressly, either disclaimed the having ever possessed such powers, or renounced them if ever possessed. But while I am bound to give this my opinion of the powers of a diocesan convention respecting the faith of the Church, I must at the same time observe, that it is very doubtful whether the Convention at Salisbury, can in that preamble be said to have declared what was the faith of the Church. The preamble consists of three parts. In the first, it is declared to be the *opinion* of this Convention, that the Church nowhere requires the *practice* of auricular confession and private absolution. In the second, the language of Bishop Hobart is adopted by the Convention as the expression of its own opinion. In the third, the satisfaction of the Convention is expressed with the Charge which you sent to the Convention. Certainly no fault can be found with the last part. In the first there is no opinion declared of a point of faith, but of a point of discipline. She (the Church) nowhere

requires the *practice* of auricular confession and private absolution. The first clause of the quotation from Bishop Hobart relates to the Church of Rome, and it can only be in the following words adopted by the Convention, from that eminent Bishop, that any declaration of what is the faith of the Church can be supposed to be advanced.

“The Churchman justly deems auricular confession and absolution, an encroachment on the rights of conscience—an invasion of the prerogatives of the Searcher of hearts; and with some exceptions, hostile to domestic and social happiness, and licentious and corrupting in its tendency.”

Now unless this quotation, adopted by the Convention as their own, must be considered as having reference to doctrine, and not to discipline, the Convention have in nowise “published their authoritative judgment of what the Bishop and his clergy are to teach,” as the doctrine of the Church. I do not undertake to advocate even what the Convention has done, but it must, at the least, be acknowledged that the preamble is expressed with very great moderation. A great part of it is a quotation from a prelate whose character is deeply revered, and whose memory is cherished in the Church, and by none, it is to be presumed, more than by yourself. Great satisfaction is in the preamble expressed at the delivery of your charge.

Nor is this all to be alleged. A preamble had been passed by the Convention, to which it was understood you seriously objected. With the full consent of the mover of the preamble and resolution, as I have

learned, one of your friends waited on you with this preamble and resolution, and "they were modified at your bed-side to meet your views, and you expressed your satisfaction."

The modified preamble and resolution were willingly adopted by the Convention in place of the original one.

I do not adduce this transaction, Sir, to show that you approved of the *action* of the Convention; I do not adduce it to show any inconsistency between this assent and the condemnation of the action of the Convention contained in your Pastoral. I do not suppose that you did approve of the action of the Convention, but assented to the modified preamble and resolution as being least opposed to your wishes; and I do not think that acts performed during serious indisposition, with its concomitant depression, should be judged of with the same strictness as acts performed during health; but I adduce it to show that there was no hostility to you personally, but on the contrary, that there was a desire to obtain, as far as possible, your sanction for what was done, from personal as well as official respect towards you.

The next point relates to the violation of rubrics. I must here confess my surprise at the extent of your charge and the manner of making it. It is first against every clergyman. You declare (p. 58) that after mature deliberation, you hesitate not to affirm, that no clergyman in this diocese is free from such a charge, and none less than the members of the Committee themselves; and then you proceed: What clergyman does so and so? What priest does so and

so? adding, "when each member of the Committee, and each clergyman in the diocese can declare before God, that in none of these respects he has failed to come up to the letter or spirit of the rubrical law of the Church, then, and not till then, may he consistently be intolerant of such as violate the rubrics."

Allow me, Sir, to ask, what can be the purport of these questions? Do you actually mean to charge upon every clergyman in the diocese, the breach of every one of these rubrics? From your selecting these rubrics and taking no notice of others, it might appear so. And yet I can hardly think it was your meaning, even with respect to any one clergyman, for what clergyman can there be in this diocese, who ministers in such neglect of his solemn promise of obedience? I beg that you will state it plainly, that we may know what answer to return to your charge.

I certainly have not the same opportunity of judging of these matters as yourself. The clergy of North Carolina have, however, ever been supposed observers, and not breakers of rubrics, and if the contrary has, in any instance, to anything like the extent here implied, been the case, does no blame attach to you for having permitted such breaches? As to some of those rubrics—for instance, those which relate to clergyman's intercourse with the rich, it is hardly probable you should know whether they were or were not observed. I must then suppose your object was to have us give evidence against ourselves; or was it, to call on us to exculpate ourselves not from those violations of the rubrics of which you knew us to be guilty, but of those of which you suspected we

might be guilty. But if so, is it reasonable, Sir, that you should make, and we should answer such an appeal? How are we to answer it? By what means? In what way? And that you may not think I wish to evade your appeal, I beg the favor of you to say in what respects you know me to violate the rubrics. I neither mean to affirm or deny that such is the case, but as I full well am conscious that I have no ends to answer in violating the rubrics, no desire to do so, I promise you, by the grace of God, to amend as soon as you have pointed out my delinquencies.

One thing is certain, those delinquencies could not have been very great; since I do not recollect your having pointed out to me but one irregularity, and that one was corrected as soon as pointed out. I do not speak of occasional acts of forgetfulness—of undesigned inadvertencies; unhappily I am but too subject to these things; but of purposed and especially of habitual violations.

You do indeed, exculpate us in a certain way from any blame, in the charge you have made against us, for you declare, “While, however, I say that all my clergy, more or less, violate the rubrics, I am bound to add my belief that no one either does, or has done it, needlessly, or with a view to depart from the faith or worship of the Church..” Now, if none of us have violated the rubrics needlessly, then are we acquitted of any sort of blame, for need or necessity is an imperious master that will be obeyed. But I am afraid, Sir, your “needlessly” has not this rigid signification; for you state it as your conviction, “that the Church intended the rubrics rather as

general directions than as inflexible laws ; to be strictly followed when circumstances will admit of it, but to be departed from where, in the candid and filial judgment of the priest, her leading purposes demand it, as sometimes they unquestionably do.' I do not deny but that there may be occasions on which the Church requires a necessary act to be done, which, if done, cannot from circumstances be done in its fullness, rubrically. In which case, who can doubt that it would be better to regard the spirit than the letter of the rubric ? As for instance, suppose a minister called on to baptise a child in a remote part of the country, where no regular congregation existed, nor was likely soon to exist, which would be preferable, to use the form of public or private baptism ? If by circumstances, you mean isolated cases of this sort, they, I conceive, are so far from a violation, that they can barely be called a departure from the rubric. But cases of this sort can rarely if ever occur in regular congregations. What circumstances can possibly require, "that in the baptism of an infant, the water should not be *poured* on it ?" What circumstances can ever require "that the season of Lent should not be observed ?" What circumstances can ever require that the "remaining consecrated bread and wine should not be *reverently* eaten and drunk immediately after the blessing ?" and I am much afraid, Sir, that what you say on this head is calculated to open the door at once to the wildest license. According as each clergyman may deem that circumstances warrant his departure from the rubric ; caprice, convenience, *peculiarity of opinion* ;

a variety of causes will influence his practice, and produce the greatest disorder and confusion. But, Sir, let it be observed, that the Committee do not speak of such departure from rubrical observance as imply mere neglect, or such as are of minor importance, they speak of such as *violate* the rubrics; that is, as the whole passage shows, they speak of the introduction of such ceremonies as violate the rubrics. That such a distinction is of importance, will appear from a single example. The first rubric under the ministration of "Private Baptism," requires that "The minister shall often admonish the people, that they defer not the baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other holy day following between, unless upon a great and reasonable cause." Suppose the minister often admonish his people not to defer the baptism of their children any longer than is necessary, but seldom if ever mention the exact time specified in the rubric. He may be said to depart from the strict letter of the rubric, but he could not be said to violate it, much less to introduce a ceremony which violates it. But suppose a clergyman were to have a pix placed on the "Holy table," and in that pix should reserve the consecrated element for daily receiving; surely this, if any thing, must be called a violation of the rubrics: yes, the introduction of a ceremony in violation of the rubrics. Now this was done at Valle Crucis, and done with your sanction, if not with your advice.

I must here express my surprise at a question you have put in the 55th page of your Pastoral. The

Committee had spoken of ceremonies unauthorized by the custom of this Church. You ask of *what* Church? You will find the answer, Sir, in the preface to the Prayer Book, in the second question to the deacon, in "The Ordering of Deacons;" in the first in that of Priest, and first in that of Bishops. I would beg leave also to refer you to the 35th Article.

IV. As intimately connected with the report of the Committee, I proceed to notice your remarks on the subject of the "Society of the Holy Cross." Here, I must confess, that if the Committee could not with propriety, they might with great truth, have declared they were happy to learn that no such society was then in existence. I hope that if I express my opinion somewhat plainly on this subject, I shall be pardoned, as I trust in doing so I shall not transgress the bounds of that respect justly due to you.

Your address to the clergymen who came to you in New-York in 1847, shows that these young clergymen were by you suspected of not being very strongly attached to "our branch of the Church." But in your address to them, and your reception of them, no one can find, as I think, just cause of censure; surely it was the duty of a bishop to take charge of those who might be wavering in the faith; and endeavor to confirm them therein. But that the means you took for this purpose were not merely injudicious, but wrong, I am constrained to believe; and I thank God, that in the dissolution of the Society of the Holy Cross, which you have assured us of, the evil has been so far remedied. It seems these "young men wished to devote themselves soul and body to

Christ, according to the evangelical counsels," or in other words, if I understand it, they wished to take a vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience ; and as there were to be perpetual members, so in the case of these perpetual members, a vow of perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience. Now, Sir, with all deference for your higher authority, I must be allowed to say that I consider any such vow as fraught with the most serious evils. In the last particular of obedience, as decidedly contrary to Christian duty. What evils have resulted to the cause of good morals, not only from the enforced celibacy of the clergy as existing in the Church of Rome, but also from voluntary vows of celibacy, (which indeed amount to the same thing,) the history of the Church has sadly showed in all ages. I look upon the *enforced* or *vowed* celibacy of the clergy, with the enforced confessional, as one of the sorest moral evils with which Christendom was ever afflicted. And if any one wishes to see the truth of this position, let him examine the authorities quoted by Jewell in his Defence of his Apology for the Church of England, (vol. IV, p. 565. et seq., p. 612. et seq. Jelf's edit.,) and by Bishop Hall in his first book of the Honor of the Married Clergy, (section 20.) Let it be understood, I do not here speak of a *life* of celibacy simply, for if any one, and especially a clergyman, believes that he can thereby best serve God, save his own soul, and advance the welfare, especially the spiritual welfare of his fellow men ; who shall undertake to censure such conduct ? It is of the *vow* I speak, and not of the life. Of a vow, by which young persons ignorant of the world, ignorant of

themselves, ignorant of the peculiar relations in which they may be placed, and temptations to which they may be subjected, in a moment of excited feeling of ardent, but ill-directed zeal, shall irremediably devote themselves to a course of life which they may afterwards, and soon find, on many accounts, prejudicial to the true interests of religion, most ensnaring, most dangerous; but which they dare neither keep nor depart from without sin, without great peril to their souls, peril on the one hand by the temptations to which they may be subjected, or peculiar duties to which they may be called, and on the other of sin in violation of the vow. Where, indeed, is the necessity of a vow? If the person desiring to enter on a life of celibacy, believe it the best, why not persevere as long as it is thus viewed to be best, without a vow? If circumstances change, if there be no longer a conviction of the necessity or duty of a single life, but the contrary, why not be free to change the condition, instead of being bound by a vow, which can neither be kept or broken without sin. The same remarks will be applicable, though not perhaps with the same degree of force, in regard to a life of poverty. Let the condition be assumed if requisite, but without a vow, lest by a vow the soul be ensnared. Who has not experienced the truth of the poet's maxim—"nitimur in vetita." Temptations are not always lessened by prohibition, nor is the desire of the forbidden object enfeebled because the prohibition has unnecessarily come from ourselves.

With respect to the vow of obedience, the objection in my mind is still stronger, for what is this vow

of obedience, taken ? is it for the purpose of enforcing the dutiful submission which the ordinal and canons require from the inferior clergy to their bishop ? Then is it unnecessary ; and not only unnecessary, but wrong ; for it substitutes in place of the Church's authority, the authority of a self-constituted and limited society ; or, at the very least, disparages such Church authority as if it were insufficient. Is this vow of obedience for the purpose of creating new obligations ? new acts of submission towards you as bishop ? then such vow of obedience declares the insufficiency of the Church's requisitions, and makes requisitions and exacts duties which she has nowhere made or exacted or countenanced. Was this vow of obedience made to you or any one else as the head of the institution ? Suppose then a member of the Holy Cross had removed to another diocese, would he thereby have been absolved from his vow ? or would his vowed obligation to obey the head of his society have still continued ? If it would, would it not have conflicted seriously with his obligations to obey the bishop of the diocese to which he might have removed ? But what was the extent of that vow ? As the society, according to the account you have given of it, resembled, it appears to me, in many respects, the Society of the Jesuits ; was it a vow not only to submit implicitly the *actions* 'to the command of a superior,' the 'go and he goeth,' the 'come and he cometh,' the 'do this and he doeth it,' (one of the most serious objections, in my opinion, to the military life,) but along with this, was there the submission of even the dictates of the *understanding* and the freedom of the *will* ? If so, high

time, indeed, were it that the society should be, and happy may we be that it is dissolved ; may we never have a renewal of it in any kind or degree. But I must further maintain, Sir, that the rules of order of the society, manifest much that is to be censured. Why are the members of the society required to “ inculcate on the minds of all within their reach the Sacramental system of the Church, particularly Baptismal Regeneration, the Real Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and Sacerdotal Absolution ? ” Why should such teaching be given such peculiar prominence ? Either these are doctrines of the Church or they are not. If they are, then the Church insists on their being inculcated in their proper order, time and degree. And I must contend that it is not only inexpedient but wrong to institute a society for doing that unduly which the Church requires to be done duly. If they are not, then they ought not to be inculcated at all. I have frequently heard you speak in terms of reprobation of self-constituted societies out of the Church, for the purpose of effecting any object of morals, because they thrust themselves into the place of an institution of God’s appointment—the Church—and attempt to influence their members by inferior motives than those of duty to God and our eternal interests. But, Sir, do you think societies out of the Church, for the purpose of affecting moral objects, are a greater usurpation of her rights than societies in the Church for effecting similar objects, besides giving undue prominence to such objects ? But what is meant by the Sacramental system ? What by Baptismal Regeneration ? By Sacerdotal Absolution ? By the Real

Presence? These expressions *may* mean nothing more than what our Church teaches, but they may mean a great deal more, and according to what is supposed to be your views, may in our opinion teach much more; the last expression especially—"The Real Presence"—is liable to be much misunderstood. It is a term not employed in the offices of the Church, although it has been employed by many of her eminent Divines. It may mean the Spiritual presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, taught in the Catechism, the Litany, and the 20th and 29th Articles, or it may mean Transubstantiation, Consubstantion, or some nice distinction of a corporal presence, distinct, if such can be, from either of these, but still most certainly not in accordance with the teachings of our Church. And thus the undue prominence given to these parts of what you term the sacramental system, may really not be the true sacramental system, and may be opposed to the teachings of our Church.

In connection with this subject of the Society of the Holy Cross, there naturally arises the consideration of that which you have introduced on the 70th page of your Pastoral, the manual of devotion placed in the hands of boys at Valle Crucis. Without resorting to *any other evidence* to show the light, the too favorable light, excuse me for saying, in which you appear to me to have viewed this most serious, this most censurable proceeding, I am truly distressed to find you mentioning it in such terms as your Pastoral exhibits. In page 24, you say, "some expressions were objected to;" and again, "there had been no designed violations of our standards, nor disobedience of my directions."

“Expressions! no designed violations?” No disobedience to your directions? Alas! Sir, is this the mode in which a Bishop of this Church should speak of the introduction into a manual of devotions, put into the hands of boys intrusted to the care of those supposed faithful to the Church, of the following prayers:

1. “The Hail Mary,” so common in books of Romish devotion, and which, though salutations of mere honor from the angel and Elizabeth to the ever blessed and most honored Virgin, mother of our Lord while on earth, become acts of *religious homage* and *adoration*, when addressed to her in the other world.

2. The following prayer to the guardian angel:—“Oh! blessed angel, to whose care I am committed by God’s mercy, enlighten, defend and govern me through all my life, and to the hour of my death. Amen.” O, Sir, are these to be characterized as “expressions,” and “no designed violations of our standards?” If there is any part of the corrupt system of the Church of Rome that I hold in deepest abhorrence, it is her polytheistic and idolatrous worship, as a violation of the two first commandments, the very foundation of all duty to God, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” In the manual, then, was there no “worshipping of angels,” (Col. ii. 18.) was there no violation of the standards of the Church?

3. There was also in that manual the following prayer for the dead: “Bless the dead in Christ, grant them remission of sins, and a peaceful rest in Thee.” I am truly alarmed to hear what you say on this

head. Can it be possible, that in page 56th of your Pastoral, you show your favorable inclinations towards this practice so *strongly*, as even to accuse those who "fail to remember in their prayers and oblations the faithful departed," of virtually denying the Communion of Saints, and consequently, of being, virtually, heretics ; inasmuch the "Communion of Saints" is an article of the Apostles' Creed ; could you have meant this for the Church herself ; for unless you suppose the Church has somewhere remembered the faithful departed, in her prayers and oblations, she must come under your censure ? Oh ! Sir, let me hope that these words escaped you in an unguarded moment, and that you did not see the force of your expressions.

The history of this manual, so far as I am acquainted with it, is not calculated to impress the Church favorably, as regards the condition of the institution at Valle Crucis. I find from your statement that you had corrected the manual of devotion a year before issuing your late Pastoral. And yet another copy, containing the very same passages, is discovered in the possession of another youth returning home from Valle Crucis after the Convention. And these two copies are the only two publicly known. Surely this indicates, to speak in mild terms, great negligence and indifference with respect to these unscriptural practices on the part of him or those who had charge of the education of these boys. Here, I think, is most serious cause of alarm, and pardon me for saying, I think you have far too easily borne with these practices.

With respect to this institution at Valle Crucis,

you tell us, "For years I have sought to induce you to take the responsibility of this institution, and particularly by a public proposal at the Convention in Newbern, 1847." But I would respectfully ask, Sir, what kind of responsibility did you wish the Convention to assume? none certainly but a pecuniary responsibility; and what obligation, what propriety was there for the Convention to assume a responsibility of which, from past experience, they had learned the danger and the evils. The Convention at Washington, in 1844, through the report of the Missionary Committee, declined entering into the measure before any pecuniary embarrassment had arisen, why should they assume the responsibility of that undertaking after such embarrassment had ensued?

You call on us, Sir, in the conclusion of your Pastoral, in eloquent and moving terms, to "stand firm with you once more against the enemy of truth, of God and righteousness, in this evil day." When did we fail to stand up for the truth, that you call on us to do it once more? When, and in what respect have we altered? Wherein have we deserted the truth and turned aside to error? If for "nearly twenty years" the diocese has proceeded in harmony with you, from whence comes the change? Have you retained your original position, and have the clergy and laity gone from you—or any considerable portion of them? Have you brought no strange things to our ears—whether true or false, still strange; and can you expect us to adopt them, contrary as we believe them to be to the teachings we have always received? You declare (p. 73) that you "boldly aver you have

gone beyond no doctrine of the Church: sought to introduce no new practice." If by "the Church," you mean what you fitly characterize as "our branch of the Catholic Church," then I must contend that your judgment of your own teaching differs from the judgment of almost all, if not all those of any weight of opinion, who have expressed a public opinion on this subject, unless perhaps the excellent Bishop of South Carolina be an exception.

If your doctrine be really in accordance with the doctrine of our Church, then has your doctrine been most grievously misunderstood, or the Church's doctrine has been misunderstood. For who has not supposed that you have intended to inculcate the general if not absolute necessity of a private confession *to a priest*, of all *mortal* sins, and the eminent propriety, if not necessity, of *private* absolution to the penitent? Who has not been under the impression that when you insisted on the necessity of priestly absolution for the remission of sins, it was on the necessity of *private* priestly absolution you insisted, inasmuch as the public absolution is always to be obtained by the penitent in the public offices of the Church? Who has not supposed that you taught the necessity of the judgment of the priest upon our sins, our mortal sins, at least before such absolution could be granted; and that for such judgment the private confession of all mortal sins that could be remembered must be made? Who has not supposed that in your teaching on these points, you approached nearly, if you did not entirely agree with the teaching of the Church of Rome, as exhibited in the 14th Session of the Council of Trent?

I would then, Sir, respectfully but earnestly beseech you to remove our doubts, and explain distinctly and fully, what is really your doctrine on these subjects. Permit me then, for the resolution of our doubts, to propose to you the following questions. When in page 25 of your late Pastoral, you speak of "the necessity of priestly absolution ; to remit all sin after baptism, &c." do you mean such absolution as is conveyed in the Lord's Supper, to the penitent and worthy receiver? If so, there can be no difficulty ; for the Church, in conformity with Holy Scriptures, teaches us that this sacrament, as well as Baptism, is generally necessary to salvation. No one, therefore, can expect the remission of sins after baptism, who is wilfully not a partaker of the Holy Eucharist, for such person shuts himself out from the chief means of grace, under the Christian covenant. Or do you mean, The declaration of absolution to God's people, being penitent, to all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel? Now without inquiring into the exact nature and degree of the efficacy of this absolution, or of its necessity ; as a practical question, we need not dispute about it ; there need be little or no difficulty. For every sincere penitent, every true worshipper of God, receives such absolution every time he worships God in public ; and no one can expect such benefit from such absolution, who for his sins is justly excommunicate ; or whose gross, though secret and unrepented sins, render him incapable of partaking of Christ, though he be a partaker of the sacramental bread and wine ; or who, through worldly-mindedness, or neglect, or indiffer-

ence, or conscious guilt, shuts himself out from the Communion of Saints, in the Lord's Supper. Or do you mean that there must also be a private absolution, granted separately to each penitent after a knowledge of, and judgment on his case by the priest ; and that this absolution conveys to him the actual remission of his sins ? If this be your meaning, then Sir, I must contend that the Protestant Episcopal Church, our branch of the Catholic Church, has no such doctrine.

Every true branch of the Church must have the power through her priesthood, of absolving from ecclesiastical censures ; the power of admitting to Holy Communion, those who had been excluded therefrom ; and this absolution may be performed by the priest, according to the discipline of the Church, either publicly or privately, either without or with a form ; but any private absolution of sins other than this incidental and necessary one, arising from the nature of the case, it is plain our Church does not recognize, for there is nowhere in her offices, the least hint of the *necessity* of such absolution, or of *permission* to employ it, except in the single case of a criminal condemned to death. Nor does the Church of England recognize any such necessity, for whatever may be the force of the form of absolution in the visitation of the sick, it is to be used only when the sick person "shall humbly and heartily desire it." And this, or some other declaration or pronouncing of absolution, is likewise allowed to the person who, not being able to quiet his own conscience, is exhorted to resort to some minister of God's word, "that he may receive

the benefit of absolution together with ghostly counsel and advice."

Again, with respect to private confession, you tell us in your charge to the clergy at the Salisbury Convention, "that the only confession which the Church authorizes, is the voluntary confession of the penitent in accordance with the exhortation in the Office of the Holy Communion," and in the end of your late Pastoral, you assure us of your continued adherence to the opinion expressed in that Charge. On the other hand, from various passages in your recent publications, as for instance, at page 24, of your Pastoral on the Priestly Office, p. 114, in your "Obedience of Faith," (sermon on self-examination;) page 51 and 52, of your late Pastoral; it has been generally thought that you designed to inculcate the *necessity* of private confession of all our *mortal* sins to a priest, that he might properly judge of our state, and grant us absolution. Let me, then, beseech you, Sir, to inform us distinctly what is your exact opinion on the subject of private confession. Do you hold and teach that it is a practice *recommended* merely by the Church, to be performed occasionally under certain circumstances, in certain exigencies, and to be engaged in, or omitted, according to the discretion or conscience of each person? Or, secondly, do you hold and teach, that private confession is a part of the Church's discipline, the frequent practice of which she requires, and requires to be performed, not merely in regard to such sins as, after all the means we have ourselves employed, leave our conscience unquiet, but of our sins in general, and especially of the

weightier sins, of all the deadly or mortal sins we may commit:—which sort of private confession we are therefore bound to perform in dutiful submission to to the Church's authority? Or, lastly, do you hold and teach, that private confession to a priest, and that, of all mortal sins which we can by recollection remember, is a necessary duty arising from the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution, in order that the priest may form a right judgment of our spiritual condition, and grant us absolution accordingly? That further, we cannot omit this duty but at the peril of our souls? If the first of these is your opinion, then can we most heartily agree with you, and join in the desire and prayer that greater attention were paid to the exhortation in the Holy Communion, and that the duty recommended were more frequently practiced. But if, as is generally, I might perhaps say, universally supposed, you have gone far beyond this, gone even beyond the second opinion; and hold and teach the third, then I, and I believe I speak the sentiments of my brethren in general, cannot go with you, believing that you hold not the doctrine of our Church, but of the Church of Rome.

“The Holy Scripture,” says Barrow, (*Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*, p. 475.) “under condition of repentance and amendment of life, upon recourse to God and trust in his mercy, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, doth offer and promise remission of sins, acceptance with God, justification and salvation; this is the tenor of the Evangelical Covenant, nor did the primitive Church know other terms.”

“But the Pope doth preach another doctrine, and

requires other terms, as necessary for remission of sins and salvation, for he hath decreed the confession of all, and each mortal sin, which a man by recollection can remember, to a priest, to be necessary thereto ; although the fathers (particularly St Chrysostom) frequently have affirmed the contrary."

Again, Sir, on page 51, you say, "priestly absolution from all deadly sin after baptism, is regarded as necessary." In this distinction of deadly from other sins, will you inform us whether you consider the same sins as deadly to all persons, under all circumstances? and whether they are or are not, how, in either case, are we to distinguish those sins, which, being deadly, require the absolution of the priest for their remission, from those which are not deadly? And as you insist on the necessity of absolution for mortal or deadly sins only, I would ask, whether other sins, not deadly, need any remission, need any forgiveness, and if so, by what instrumentality? in what manner are they forgiven?

Another difficulty in the way of our obeying the call you have made arises from our not distinctly perceiving for what we are to stand! what enemy we are to encounter? Or, in other words, what you would have us reject as error, what receive as truth!

So lately, as in your sermon preached before the General Convention of 1844, I find you (page 18) asserting that "Papal Rome has *incurred the anathema* of the Catholic Church ;—that she has unlawfully and wickedly essayed to force her definition of the Eucharist upon the consciences of her adherents ;—

that under the same vain-glorious spirit, she has arrogated to herself the power to annul the command of Jesus, and withhold the cup of blessing from his thirsting children.” But in your late Pastoral, note to page 69, you thus express yourself: “It is said the Bishop never speaks or writes against the Romanists. Answer. (1.) There are enough who do it, without him. (2.) It does no good to our own Church. (3.) They who speak against others are very likely to speak falsely. (4.) It is against that prayer for Catholic unity which we are taught to make every time we join in our service. (5) However great may be their errors, Romanists belong to the body of Christ, and hence to the same family with us. And it is neither lawful to speak against the members of Christ’s body, nor in good taste to speak against members of our own family.” Now, Sir, I think it manifest that these two passages present a very striking difference of opinion. That the latter shows a much more favorable estimation of the followers of the Church of Rome than the former;—it certainly indicates no such strong disapprobation. How much more favorable your estimation may become, we cannot tell;—hitherto it has been progressive. How far you may wish *us* to proceed in this favorable estimation we know not. Now, as I am bound by my vows at ordination to be ready with all diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, and as I believe the Church of Rome to have many such, and most grievous, I entertain no such sympathies with the followers of Rome, as those expressed by you in the

note just now quoted. Tell us, then, Sir, I beseech you, whether you now consider the Church of Rome to hold any grievous errors? What they are? And whether you think they are, either by you, or by us, to be, at any time, noted, disclaimed, censured?

Another difficulty in answering your call is to be found in the dissatisfaction you evidently manifest towards our branch of the Church; the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States; not merely on account of its practical working, but also on account of the omission of those parts of the liturgical services of the Church of England, which have not been retained by our Church. You show, it appears to me, evidently great dissatisfaction at the omission of the private absolution in the office of the visitation of the sick, and of the Athanasian Creed. Still further, you are not satisfied even with the Church of England, as *she* at present exists. Thus, page 62, you tell us, "The once harmonious system, gathered by our Anglican forefathers; with so much toil and suffering from the Creeds and Liturgies of truly Catholic antiquity, was gradually deprived of its oneness and strength, and greatly diluted in some of its *essential* truths. One feature after another disappeared in the various attempts to adapt to it what was really *another gospel*." Now, Sir, have the goodness to tell us in what this dilution of the truth consisted? What features disappeared from the oneness of the system; what essential truth was omitted? In what respects we have another gospel? What restorations you desire to make? You have stated one of them, in the last paragraph of the same page, but when the change

was effected-of which you speak, I know not. Another of these features, which in your opinion has disappeared, is the "failing to remember in prayers and oblations, the faithful departed;" and this you consider a *virtual denial of the Communion of Saints*; (p. 56.) this remembrance of the faithful departed being retained, as you tell us, in the Prayer book of Edward the VI. You speak (p. 55) in terms of very high commendation of this Church "as established by the English Reformers," but I must confess myself totally at a loss to determine what period of the Reformation was so distinguished—was it during the reign of Edward VI., of Henry VIII?—and where is your authority to be found for this alleged superiority? But even with this or any period of the Reformation, you do not appear perfectly satisfied, for (pp. 61, 62,) you say: "The Reformation in England, however loudly called for, by the corruptions of the time, was not wholly exempt from the evils to which I have adverted. The political, and indeed personal questions which obtruded themselves into the ecclesiastical struggle with Rome, so averted and warped the mind of the nation, as in the settlement of religious truth, to allow of a decided infusion of leaven from a foreign source, into the Anglican formularies of doctrine." And again: "The struggle between these antagonist principles—the Lutheran and Sacramental—soon resulted in demands for change in the Book of Common Prayer;" after which follows the passage already quoted. Now as it is notorious that the influence of the Lutheran Divines, especially of Melancthon, on the Divines of the Church of England, and through

them on the doctrines and formularies of the Church, was exerted at the very commencement of the Reformation, much of your censure must be referred to the earliest period. We pray then, Sir, in order that we may know what you would propose to us, and how far you wish us to go, to tell us clearly and distinctly in what respects, and to what extent the system of our Church differs from the true Sacramental system; how far the Lutheran leaven has been infused into it?—what changes—what retrocessions you desire to see effected in doctrines, in ceremonies, in formularies of worship? For myself, I believe the true sacramental system does exist in our Church—the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper being the covenanted means of opening and conveying to all those who have not by impenitence and unbelief, rendered themselves incapable of receiving them, all the benefits of Christ's death and passion. Do you then, desire and propose any change in the present sacramental system of our Church? and if so, what is that change?

In the note to page 22, you speak of the canon of Chalcedon as a warning to those clergymen who band themselves together as clergymen; and on page 17, you say: "There is no canonical right except we go beyond the canon law of the Church, to which some desire to restrict us, even to repel them from the Holy Communion." Now, without entering on the inquiry whether "Socinians, Universalists, or anything else you can name," may not rightfully by the principles of the Church, be excluded from the communion, as I certainly think they may; I would ask to what canons,

besides those which this Church has set forth, would you, Sir, subject either the clergy or laity?—canons of the existence, but certainly of the character of which, the greater part of us are ignorant? That the discipline of our Church may be improved, I have no doubt; so, I dare say, may the discipline of every Church in Christendom; but neither in the case of our Church generally, nor in the particular dioceses, or, at least, in the diocese of North Carolina, do we desire to see this effected, but by the legitimate action of such laws as already exist, or by the regular enactment either in general or diocesan conventions of such as are necessary for effecting this object.

You speak in very disparaging terms, indeed, of our discipline (p. 53;) but you have not done the Church justice in this respect; whatever other deficiencies there may be, there are none in regard to her clergy. She watches with the greatest vigilance over the morals of those whom she admits to minister at her altars. She exacts a probation for three years of sound faith and spotless morals; she suffers no offences to be committed that can dishonor the character of her priesthood; and if offence be committed of such a nature as to degrade from her ministry, a return is hopeless; she never opens the door of re-admission. As long as the faith and morals of the clergy are thus guarded with a strictness hardly known in the same degree among any other body of Christians, and known at no other period except in the primitive and purest ages of the Church, we have one of the surest, if not the surest safeguards for the Christian character of the laity; for as is the pastor,

so, in a great degree will be the people. His ministrations enforced by his example, will always exert their corresponding and proportionate influence.

In your Pastoral on the Priestly Office, there are two passages to which I would beg leave to call your attention, for I either greatly misunderstand you, as is most probable, or else, if I understand you aright, they convey to my mind a most strange doctrine. In page 8 of that Pastoral you say, "The head of the Church is God manifest in the flesh." By which, I presume, you mean, of course, that the Lord Jesus Christ, as God and Man, the incarnate God;—the two natures in one person is head of the Church. A truth not to be disputed. But you go on to say, "The body, surely, cannot, in nature, be different from the head. If the Head be both human and divine, so must the body." If I understand this right, the body, that is the Church, must be then, God incarnate. For the sense in which the Head is human and divine, is that of the Head being God incarnate; and if the body is human and divine, the body must be God incarnate. Now the body is neither more nor less than the members of the body; that is the persons, the individuals, who compose the Church. And if the body is the incarnate God, each individual must be God incarnate. Can it be possible, Sir, this is your meaning? If it is not, I pray you explain what is; for I confess, the proposition, if I do not misunderstand it, is, to say the least, very startling. You say, indeed, further on, "that where one is divine and human, the other in a *certain sense* and to a *certain degree*, must be divine and human also."

The *certain sense*, and the *certain degree*, may, if explained by you, remove that which is now a great difficulty to my mind. You quote the well-known passage from St. Peter, (2 Peter i. 4.) "We are made partakers of the Divine Nature," but the apostle there speaks of the Divine *φύσις* or qualities, and not of the Divine *οὐσία* or substance, which latter, if I do not misunderstand you, would be the meaning of the passage according to your Pastoral. A meaning assigned to it by no theologian that I am aware of, unless perhaps by some German metaphysical Roman Divines, as Moehler in his Symbolism.

In page 9, you have these words : "The reconciliation, therefore, of man to God by Jesus Christ, is a much more exalted and vital union, than is sometimes supposed. A union implying not only that the sacrifice of the incarnate Son, avails to our justification ; but also, that the gracious communication of His nature puts us into a justified state, makes us again one with Himself ; not so much covers us with His righteousness, as fills us with His righteousness ; not declares us just on the ground of His own justice merely, but makes us just by the infused power of that justice ; not stands without us an ideal holiness, but is formed within us a real holiness." As far as I am able to understand this passage, it teaches neither the Calvinistic doctrine of imputed righteousness, nor the doctrine entertained by most of the great divines of the Church of England, and by our own divines generally, that we are justified by the merits of Christ as the procuring cause of our justification, when

through faith, accompanied by repentance and love, we are in a state to receive or obtain remission of our sins or justification. But you appear to teach that we are justified in consequence of that peculiar union with Christ, from which, if I do not misunderstand your meaning, as I hope I do, we are justified by *His* holiness becoming not by imputation, but *actually* ours. Can this, Sir, be possibly your meaning? If so, it is neither, I must venture to say, the doctrine of our Church, nor as a consequence, of the divines of our Church. If it be not your meaning, I pray you, explain to us what is? I must candidly confess to you, these two passages have caused me much uneasiness.

On what you say of the Oxford Tracts, it is necessary for me to make one or two observations. Your own remarks will serve to show how many, who had at first been favorable to the Oxford movement, might well indeed have become alarmed, when they witnessed the attempts in the *British Critic* to vilify the Reformers, and to laud the so-called Saints of the Church of Rome; when they witnessed the treachery of Mr. Faber, and the duplicity of Mr. Newman; when they witnessed so many lapses through the influence of the Oxford Tracts, from the pure Church of England, pure in doctrine, whatever her defects in discipline or practice may be, to the corrupt Church of Rome; from *true Christian* liberty on the one hand, to spiritual despotism on the other; a despotism producing but too commonly its natural result, spiritual licentiousness, that is, infidelity.

For myself, I can truly say, I never was a follower of the Oxford movement. I was always opposed to

any action of the General Convention on the subject of the Tracts, because I thought it of dangerous precedent, impolitic and undignified, even if it were not as I supposed it was, wrong in principle. But this arose from no favor towards these productions considered as a whole. They contained many excellent things, no doubt, much spirituality ; but were not these things to be found in other Church writings without the extravagancies, and dangerous tendencies with which they were incumbered ?

You have warned us in the concluding part of your Pastoral, against time-serving policy and time-serving conciliation. I trust your warning, Sir, will not be unheeded by us, for how liable are we all to be led astray ; and these are certainly principles which operate, and are likely to operate, but too powerfully. But there may be principles opposite to these, which may likewise lead us astray. All opposition to prevailing opinion or practice is not necessarily correct, and for the truth ; there may certainly be such a thing as error, even though sincere and self-sacrificing. I am well aware, Sir, how great is the toil and privation, and labor, both of body and mind, great the anxiety and care required in such a diocese as this, but these may be unnecessarily, imprudently, or wrongfully increased, and if so, there surely would be no unchristian prudence in avoiding being implicated in such increase of labor and care.

It is less than thirty years, that your predecessor, whom you speak of in such generous terms of praise, became the bishop of this diocese.

"Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam chari capitis."

Small was our band, and great the difficulties we had to encounter; severe the struggles against the prejudices and opposition, not only of the community without, but of some who considered themselves as within the Church. Of that small band, the present writer is the only one remaining; by death or removal all others have gone. You will pardon me for saying, I feel confident your Christian character will consider it no disparagement for me to say, that the bold and fearless, and full declaration of what he believed, was as great in your predecessor as it can be in you. Sorry was I to find you say, "that he was compelled to begin somewhat nearer the alphabet of the faith in his teaching." What faith? what alphabet? He supposed he had declared the whole counsel of God. But to whatever extent he may have gone, did you ever hear that his clergy in those days of trial and rebuke, refused to sustain him? Why should your clergy not sustain you, in all they can conscientiously? I have too high an opinion of my brethren not to believe they would do so, but then it must be for what they hold to be truth and right.

In penning this reply, I trust I have acted from a sense of duty. Most certainly it has given me pain, very great pain to be even necessarily opposed to him, who 'has the rule over over me,' and for whose person, as well as office, I have so great a regard. I hope I am sensible of the proper subordination of a presbyter to his bishop; I know that as a general rule, a bishop's opinions have more authority and influence than a presbyter's, still a bishop, when they differ, may be in error, and a presbyter may hold the truth. If I have

expressed my dissent from your opinions, or supposed opinions plainly, I hope I have done it with that respect which is due to you, and which I entertain for your person and your office ; if I have not, pardon me, for the fault is unintentional.

In conclusion, Sir, let me beseech you to remove, if possible, our doubts and difficulties ; to speak so clearly and fully, that hereafter we cannot mistake you. God grant, that ‘ for the faith once delivered to the Saints,’ we may again stand *with you*, against the enemy of truth, of God, and of righteousness.

With the greatest respect,

and personal regard,

I remain, Rt. Rev. and Dear Sir,

Your presbyter,

R. S. MASON.



A L A Y M A N ' S

LESSON TO A LORD BISHOP

ON

SACERDOTAL POWERS;

OR,

THE NECESSITY OF

CONFESSION, PENANCE, AND ABSOLUTION.

REPUBLISHED FROM THE SECOND EDITION,
(LONDON, 1713.)

BY NON-NEMO.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein.--JER. vi. 16.

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M.DCCC.XLIX.

SACERDOTAL POWERS :

OR,

THE NECESSITY OF CONFESSION, ETC.

CHAP. I.

REMARKS ON THE B——P'S VIEW OF WHAT HE CALLS
OUR HOLY RELIGION.

§. I. IN the second Sermon on the 7th of *November*, p. 20, &c. our Author gives us a short View of what he calls *Our Holy Religion*, in Opposition to the Corruptions of Popery. And it is very observable, that in all that View, he does not once shew us the **Divine Right** of Bishops, and their Independency on the See of *Rome*, in opposition to the Pope's pretended Supremacy over all Bishops : This is one Part (and a very necessary one too) of our most Holy Religion, and very destructive of Popery, and yet he leaves it out of his Plan of *our Religion* : Whether he omits it, because it is directly opposite to the Pretences and Usurpations of the several Teachers among our Sectaries, I shall not determine ; but this I am sure of, that if he had inserted it, his *Short View* would have been more proper for his L——p to be call'd the Author of of it.

§. II. The next Observation I shall make on his *Short View*, is, that he represents it as a part of our Religion, that we "*Reject all the Contrivances of Pardons.*" Now, what

he means by "*all the Contrivances of Pardons*" every body is not agreed; some will have it to signify, only *all* the Popish Corruptions of that Power, which Christ gave to the Spiritual Governors of his Church, to Pardon and Absolve Penitent Sinners; and certainly, if he means only the Popish Corruptions of the Power to Pardon; then, to be sure *we do reject them*. But others will have it, that our Author's Words should have been definite and particular, so as to have distinguish'd the *Corruptions*, from the *Authority* and *Power* of Pardoning and Absolving; that so we might have discover'd, whether he rejected the *Corruptions only*, and retain'd and asserted the *Power* of Pardoning Penitents, or no; this they say he has not done; and therefore 'tis question'd, whether he does not esteem *all Sacerdotal Pardons* to be but a *Contrivance of Popery*, and give them the name of *Contrivances*, and for that Reason, because they are *Popish Contrivances*, say that *we reject them*? But let the Design of this Expression be what it will, to say that we reject **all Contrivances of Pardons**, without making any Distinction, or Exception whatsoever, is without Excuse; for, Did not *Christ* give to his Apostles and their Successors the Power of Pardoning, when he said to them, *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted?* And is not this **One Contrivance of Pardon**, viz. *Our Lord's own Contrivance*? Has not the Church in all Ages carried on this *Contrivance*, by constantly Exercising this Power? And is it not matter of Fact, that our Church, whose Religion this Writer would seem to give us a View of, does continue to support and uphold this *Contrivance of Pardons*? When his L——p was Ordain'd and receiv'd into the Order of *Priesthood*, did not the Bishop who Ordain'd him (as our Office of ordering Priests directs) convey to him this Power, when he authoritatively told him, *Whose Sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven?* And does not his

L——p now he is a B——p, do the same to all Priests whom he Ordains? And thereby propagate and hand down to Posterity this *Contrivance of Pardons*? Nay further, to shew that all this is not bare Form and Ceremony, is it not notorious (and who but the wilfully Blind can be ignorant of it!) That this *Contrivance of Pardoning Sinners* is *actually put in Execution* by the Priests of our Church? 1. In the Absolution that immediately follows the daily Confession of Sins in our Morning and Evening Service.* 2dly, In the Absolution that immediately follows the Confession in the Communion Service; and, 3dly. And *very expressly and particularly*, with abundance of Authority, in the Visitation of the Sick, in these very Words;

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left Power to his
 “Church to **Absolve** all Sinners who truly Repent
 “and Believe in him, of his great Mercy forgive
 “thee thine Offences: And **By** his Authority
 “**committed to me, I ABSOLVE** thee from
 “**ALL THY SINS**, in the Name of the Father,
 “and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Is not all this true? And is it not carrying on our Lord's Blessed *Contrivance of Pardons*? How then can our Author tell the World that *we reject all Contrivances of Pardons*; And assert this in the Name of a B——p of our Church?

§. III. But to Proceed—In p. 21. it is said very truly, that “We give our assent to Divine Truths, because we are convinc'd that they came from God.” But then he adds, “without receiving **any thing** implicitly because

* [The references to the Prayer-book are to that of the Church of England.]

“a **Priest**, tells us of a *Tradition* for it.” Here it may be questioned, whether our *Priest-Haters*, especially some of the Ignorant sort, will not pass over the Word [Implicitly] and roundly affirm from hence, that the *Traditions* of the *Priests* are of no value, and that their Testimony concerning Divine Truths, is utterly useless to the Christian Church? We have People among us who despise all Ecclesiastical *Tradition*, because they reckon it *Popery*; And tho’ our Author has no Design to encourage them in this Error, yet still they are very apt to catch at every thing, that a Man of any Reputation says against Tradition, tho’ guarded with the greatest Care and Circumspection.—And therefore, I must put such in mind, that it is the *Priests Tradition* which hands down to us inviolably, the *Canon* of Holy Scripture. That it is upon the *Priest’s* Testimony, that we are convinc’d, that the Sacred Books were written by those *very Authors* whose Names they bear. That **PRIESTS** are the only sufficient, and credible Witnesses of this *Tradition*, because the Books were Originally committed to, and have ever since been, in their peculiar Custody, and therefore we must have some Faith in their Conveyance of this Tradition to us; and without this Faith, we can never attain to a right Belief of what is the Canon, and who were the Authors of the Holy Scriptures; and consequently, not to a Rational Assent, to all the Divine Truths contain’d in those Sacred Writings. Nay, farther, those who are not skill’d in the Original Languages of those Divine Writings, and how great is their Number! must be beholden to the *Priests*; nay, they must, as we say, pin their Faith upon *Priests* Sleeves, before they can so much as have any notice of, much more assent to the Sacred Truths contain’d in them; for ’tis from the **PRIESTS** that we have our Translations of those Sacred Repositories of Divine Truth; and what is yet

more, even the right Sense and true Meaning of the *Controverted* Texts of the Holy Scripture, is only to be obtain'd by the *Priests Tradition* of what was always receiv'd by them, for the True and Genuine Interpretation of those Disputed Texts. For Example, 'Tis by their *Tradition* that we are determin'd that all those Texts which are controverted between us and the Antipædo-Baptists, do authorize and require Infant Baptism ; that those Texts which are Disputed between us and all Sectaries concerning Church Government, do unavoidably establish the *Divine Right of Episcopacy* ; and lastly, to name no more, 'tis by this *Tradition* of the *Priests*, that we are brought to receive the first Day of the Week instead of the seventh, for our Christian Sabbath—These are Divine Truths which we receive, because the *Priests* tell us, (and we cannot justly deny it) that they have *Traditions* for them ; and I Challenge any one, to shew us a better and safer Rule for our Conviction, in things of so necessary, and Now (without this Rule) of so Disputable a Nature. Daily Experience teaches us, that if we would not be wholly Sceptical in Religious Matters ; if we would not set up for Despisers and Scorners of all Reveal'd Religion ; we must first or last receive *many things because the Priests tell us of Traditions for them.*

§. IV. Next, in the same Page, we are told thus ; “*We repent of our Sins by confessing them to God, by mourning for them, and forsaking them. But do not think that God has commanded us to tell them to a Priest, to submit to his Arbitrary Penance, and to rely on a hasty Absolution.*”

Here we see it is represented as a part of our Religion, not to confess our Sins to a Priest ; and certainly, if we may *reject all Contrivances of Pardons* (as we have been told we do) there's no need for such a Confession : And then

Penance for Sin enjoyn'd by a Priest, whether Arbitrary or not, will be utterly unreasonable to be submitted to; for, where there is no *Power to Absolve*, there can be no *Duty* or Obligation to *Confess*; and consequently no Authority to impose *Penance*, and therefore no Duty to submit to it when impos'd. The Enemies of the Christian Priesthood will gladly hear, that *God has not commanded us to tell our Sins to a Priest*, grant 'em but this, and they will draw the Inference, That *Priests have no Power to Absolve Sinners*; and consequently that their Absolution, whether *Hasty* or more *Deliberate*, is not to be rely'd on. If this be receiv'd as true, then it may be ask'd, whether many Ignorant, tho' well meaning People, will not pronounce all *Priestly Absolution*, all *Confession of Sins to a Priest*, and all Submission to *Ecclesiastical Penance* for the Mortification of Sin, to be but meer Impositions and Inventions of corrupt Popery, and nothing else but Priestcraft and Spiritual Tyranny? We find by woful Experience, that Men are too much addicted to interpret every thing to the abatement of the Power and Authority of the Christian Priesthood, and to the Banishment of all Ecclesiastical Discipline out of the World. The Disease is now become epidemical and Infectious, especially among us of the Laity: And therefore I think it highly necessary that some Remedy should be apply'd, and in order thereto shall endeavor to prove,

First, That the Great Author of our most Holy Religion, *Christ Jesus*, has given the Power of Pardoning and Absolving Sinners, to the Bishops and Priests of his Church, to the End of the World.

Secondly, That his giving this Power to the^s Priests, lays an Obligation upon Men under several Circumstances, to tell or confess their Sins to them, that they may receive the Benefit of their Special and particular Absolution. And,

Thirdly, That Men are bound to submit to their Lawful and Prudent Injunctions, which they shall lay on them by way of Penance, for the Mortification of their Sins.

CHAP. II.

OF SACERDOTAL ABSOLUTION.

§. I. AND First, That Christ has given this Pardoning and Absolving Power to the Bishops and Priests of his Church, is abundantly evident, 1st. From his Promise to his Apostles before his Crucifixion, "*Whatsoever ye shall Loose on Earth shall be Loosed in Heaven*, St. Mat. xviii. 18. And, 2dly. From his actually conferring this Power on them after his Resurrection, when he Appear'd to them, and first made them **His own Representatives**, saying, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I You*, St. John xx. 21. When he had hereby authorised them to send others vested with their Apostolic Authority, as his Father had sent him to confer his Apostolic Authority upon them, "*Then He Breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whosoever Sins Ye Remit, they are Remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye Retain, they are Retained*, ver. 22, 23. In these Words 'tis plain, that the Authority of Remitting Sins which Christ gave his Apostles, is more than *meerly Declarative*, [*Whosoever Sins Ye Remit:*] This is the Apostle's *Act of Forgiving* by Vertue of Christ's Authority, whose *Delegates* they are. And this *Act* of theirs is *Effectual*, and *really* conveys the Pardon pronounc'd, and insures to the *Penitent* the present Certainty thereof, as much as if Christ himself had pronounc'd it; for our

Lord says positively **They are Remitted**, they are Pardon'd and done away. And the same he says concerning the Apostle's Power, to retain Sins, that when they do retain them, *They are Retain'd*, they actually remain bound upon the Impenitent sinner. These are Judicial Acts which have a constant and never-failing *Energy* upon their *proper Subjects*, and do really effect what they express; and this Efficacy is *as sure* as the *Divine Veracity*, because Christ, *who is God*, is the giver of this Authority, he *concurs* with *his Proxy's* due Execution of it; and expressly asserts the immediate and present Effect thereof, *They are Remitted; They are Retained*.

This Power and Authority, greater than that of the Angelick Spirits, the *Sovereign King and Supreme Head* of his Church, gave expressly to his Apostles, *his Vicegerents*; and to the end that this unspeakably great Authority might not terminate and expire with their Persons, you see that *He sent them even as his Father sent him*: For, as his Father had sent him with sufficient Power to confer *His* Authority on others, *EVEN SO* our Lord sent *His* Apostles with sufficient Power to confer their Authority on others; otherwise he did not send them *even as* his Father sent him—But they had the Authority of *Remitting and Retaining* Sins; therefore they were sent with sufficient Power to confer on others their Authority of *Remitting and Retaining* Sins: Nay, so Extensive and Unbounded is the Duration of this Authority to forgive Sins, that it must continue in the Priesthood *to the end of the World*; we have our Great God and Saviour's own Word for it; for he positively promis'd *These* his Apostles, [thus authoriz'd] *Lo, I am with You always, even unto the end of the World*, St. Matt. xxviii. 20—i. e. I am with you, *my Apostles*, whom I have vested with a Power of Forgiving Sins, and of *sending others* vested by you with the

same Power ; I say I am with you as long as you shall Live, and then successively so with all other *such Apostles*, and others whom you and they shall send with this Power of Absolving, and I will concur with you and them in the Execution of this and all other ordinary Spiritual Powers I have given you, (which is the only way of my being with you as Apostles) *always, even unto the End of the World* : For, if this Power of Forgiving Sins, which was one Part of the *Ordinary* Power of the Apostles, were not to be continued throughout all Ages in their Successors, and those whom they should vest with this Authority ; then it would follow, that the *Ordinary* Apostolic Power must cease before the End of the World ; and consequently, that Christ would not be true to his Promise of continuing to be with *His Apostles to the End of the World* : For 'tis impossible to have Apostles without Apostolic Powers ; and therefore, if the Apostolic Power and Authority must cease, **Apostles themselves must cease also**, and then Christ is not with his Apostles always, **even to the End of the World**, tho' he gave his sacred Word for it, that he would be *always* with them. This is such a *blasphemous Affront* upon our Saviour's Faithfulness, and such a *Contradiction* to his infallible Promise, that it ought to be abhorr'd and detested by all Men. And therefore, as long as the World shall last, Christ will be present with *Apostles* ; as long as he is present with *Apostles*, there must be *Ordinary Apostolic Powers*, and as long as there shall be ordinary Apostolic Powers, there must be the Power of *Remitting* and *Retaining* Mens Sins, which is one of those *Ordinary Powers* : That is, this Power must be in the Apostles, and their Successors the Bishops, and such as are, and shall be Ordain'd by them for this purpose, to the End of the World ; *i. e.* the Priests of the Christian Church, have a Power of pardoning

and absolving Sinners in Christ's stead to the End of the World.

§. II. *Obj.* 1. The avow'd Enemies of this Great Prerogative of the Christian Priesthood, will doubtless Object, That the Authority of pardoning and absolving Sinners, given by Christ to his Apostles, was an extraordinary Gift for the Exigencies of the infant State of the Church, as the Power of working Miracles was; that it was no ordinary Part of the Apostolick Power, any more than that of working Miracles, and that consequently, tho 'tis true, 'That the Apostles and their Successors, do convey to others the ordinary Powers Apostolical, yet 'tis as true, that they do not convey thro' all Ages, the extraordinary Powers Apostolical, because we see they have not convey'd the Power of working Miracles, which is ceas'd; and therefore they cannot convey to others the Power of absolving Sinners, because this Power was also an extraordinary Apostolic Power.

Ans. To which I answer: Not to enumerate the particular *extraordinary Powers* wherewith the first Apostles were endow'd by the plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost.—This is certain, that those Powers which Christ gave the Apostles before his Ascension, and which would be *always necessary* to be exercis'd for the Supply of the continual *Ordinary Spiritual* Exigencies and Necessities of the Church, during its Militant State; I say, 'tis certain, that those Powers are the *Ordinary Apostolic Powers*, which were to be convey'd by the Apostles and their Successors the Bishops, wholly and entirely; *i. e.* all of them to the Bishops; and partially *i. e.* some of them to other inferior Officers, as Priests and Deacons, for the continual Supply of those ordinary spiritual Wants of the Church, to the *end of the World*.—Now, that the *Power of Remitting Sins*, is one of those ordinary Apostolic Powers, is plain; be-

cause, the Members of the Church in all Ages, stand as much in need of this Remission of Sins as ever they did, even in the Days of the Apostles themselves; for there is no Reason can be given for the Necessity of such a Remission in the first planting of the Church, which will not equally hold good for the Necessity of the like Remission in all the After-Ages of the Church: During our Warfare with the invisible Powers of Darkness, there will be Sinners in the Church; and as long as there shall be Sinners, there will be a Necessity for the Restoration of Penitents by Priestly Absolution, if ever there was any Necessity at all for such a Restoration of them; and we see that Christ himself once thought there was such a Necessity, by his giving such a Power to his Apostles. If it be said, that God has promis'd *Pardon to the Penitent*, and therefore they may rest *assured* that God will pardon them without the Priest's Absolution. The Answer is, That his Promise was as sure in the Apostles' Days, as 'tis now; and yet our Lord would notwithstanding vest them with his Power of Absolution; and Men were bound, in many Cases, to sue to them for it; otherwise our Lord would not have given them such Power. This Objection was as strong against the Primitive Christians applying to the Priests for Pardon, and against the Priests remitting their Sins then, as it is now: But the Truth is, it was not in those Days a just Objection at all, as is evident by our Lord's granting such Power to Men; and therefore 'tis no just Objection now, since Mens Necessities are still the same. God may doubtless pardon such Penitents as cannot obtain, and yet do not *neglect* or *contemn* the Priestly Absolution; But then it ought to be remember'd, that he has never granted any Pardon, but by the Intercession of the great Mediator Christ Jesus; that under the Patriarchal and *Mosaic* Dispensations, his Pardons were convey'd by the instituted

Means of Priests and Sacrifices, and Burnt-Offerings, made by them, as Representatives of that great Mediator.—And that under the Christian Dispensation, the same Mediator has appointed his own Representatives, to convey in his stead, God's Pardon to Penitents; and therefore the *Despisers* of this Power have no Claim to his Promise, since they cannot fairly be call'd true Penitents, who despise and reject any one Institution of God. And that this of the Priestly Absolution is such an Institute as is binding and obliging in all Agés, is plain from what has been said above; *viz.* That 'twas *an ordinary* Part of the Apostolic Power, because equally as necessary to be exercised now for our spiritual Benefit, as it was for theirs in the first Ages of Christianity. And this the Apostles and their successors, in all Ages and Places, have confirm'd to be true, by constantly conferring this Power on others, and their Execution thereof to this Day, without Interruption; and our Church in strict Conformity to them, does both confer and execute this great Power, as I have before observ'd.

§. III. *Obj.* 2. It is objected by others against the Power of the Priest's Absolution—That the Apostles were endow'd with a miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits, and so knew infallibly the Sincerity and Truth of Mens Repentance, and therefore had Authority to absolve Penitents from their Sins, which their Successors now have not, because they are destitute of this miraculous Power of discerning the Thoughts of Mens Hearts.

Answ. To which it is answer'd, that it cannot be prov'd, that the Gift of discerning Spirits was given to the Apostles, **more** to enable them to absolve Penitents, than to perform any other Parts of their sacred Office, for the benefit of repenting Sinners. But not to enquire here for what Purposes this Gift was bestow'd on **Some**, we find, that this mira-

culous Power, even in the Apostles Days, was not always given to *every Minister* of Christ, who yet had sufficient Power and Authority to convey such spiritual Benefits to Men, as were due to them, **only** upon Condition of their *Sincere and hearty Repentance*. Thus we find *Philip* the Deacon had Authority to baptise for the Forgiveness of Sins, tho' he does not appear to have been endow'd with the miraculous Power of discerning Spirits; at least, 'tis plain that he was not assisted by this Power, when he Baptis'd *Simon Magus*, *Acts* viii, 13. without being *Infallibly* assur'd of the Truth of his Repentance; for in Fact, he was *no true Penitent*, but a Cheat and an Impostor, as his after History shews. This Baptism would have been effectual for the Forgiveness of his Sins, and his spiritual Sanctification, if he had been truly Penitent, tho' *Philip* did not *Infallibly* know that he was so. This want of Discerning did not destroy *Philip's* Authority to convey Forgiveness of Sins by Baptism; 'twas the Baptised's Fault, if he by his Insincerity and Hypocrisy, miss'd of those great Benefits. So the Priests of the Church of *Corinth*, were destitute of this miraculous Power, when they admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, such unworthy Communicants, as were not true Penitents, for they eat and drank Damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's Body, *1 Cor.* xi. 29, 30. But still their Authority to administer that Sacrament, was effectual to the worthy Communicants; and when Men received no Benefit by it, 'twas owing *only* to their own Sins, and not to any want of the *Commission'd* Administrators Authority.

In both these Cases *Repentance* is necessary; and *Remission of Sins* is given in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, only upon *that Condition*: And tho' the Minister hath not an *Infallible Knowledge*, yet he may have a *Moral Certainty* of the *Repentance*, and other Spiritual Qualifica-

tions of those Persons, to whom he administers those two Sacraments; provided he, and they, are so just as to do those several Duties which the right Administration and Reception of those Sacraments necessarily call for; and therefore his Authority given him to administer them, remains good and valid.

Thus we see, that this Objection is of no force against *Sacerdotal* Remission of Sins, by means of the two Sacraments,—and it is of as little Consequence against the Priest's Authority to *Pronounce*, and thereby to *convey* to sincere Penitents the *Absolution* and *Remission of their Sins*. For even the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, *St. Paul himself*, does not appear to have exercis'd this Authority, as endow'd with the miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits; no, we rather find him absolving the Penitent *Corinthian*, without this *Infallible Knowledge* of his Repentance, upon *Moral Signs* and *Tokens* thereof, given him by Letters or Messages from the Church of *Corinth*; and upon *Confidence* of the Integrity and Honesty of the Relators of it: For being at *Philippi*, a City of *Macedonia*, he heard a common Report, that the Christians of *Corinth* were guilty of the Sin of Fornication, 1 *Cor.* v. 1. and particularly, that one of them incestuously took his Father's Wife;—upon which he wrote to them, and *commanded* them to *Excommunicate* this incestuous Person, *Ver.* 3, 4, 5, and 13. which they accordingly did.—In his second Epistle, he tells them the Reason of his writing and commanding them so to censure that notorious Sinner, That he “**might know the** *Proof of them, whether they were obedient in all things,* 2 *Cor.* ii. 9.” He did not by virtue of the miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits, **know** their Obedience at that Distance; he wanted a Proof thereof; which they accordingly gave him, by the Infliction of that Punishment on the Offender, which he had commanded; and which *Titus* upon his

Return from *Corinth*, acquainted St. *Paul* with, as is plain from 2 *Cor.* vii. 6, 12, &c.—The Apostle being thus inform'd of the Obedience of the *Corinthians*, and also of the Sorrow and Repentance of the incestuous Person, writes to them to forgive him, 2 *Cor.* ii. 6, 7, 8. and to encourage them thereto, pronounces his Absolution himself, tho' at that Distance from them, upon the Credit which he gave to *Titus's* Relation of that Affair ; for says he, “ *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also, &c. in the Person of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 10.*” or by the *Authority* which I have receiv'd from Jesus Christ.—And one Reason why he would have the incestuous Person absolv'd, was (as in *ver. 7.*) “ *Lest perhaps such a one should be swallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow ;*” this putting it upon a [*perhaps*] does by no means comport with *any Infallible Knowledge* that the Apostle could have of the *Penitent's Sorrow* ; for if he had, by a *miraculous* Gift of discerning, known the true Nature, and *certain* Effects thereof, he would never have used so *doubtful* an Argument, but rather have affirm'd **positively**, without any **perhaps**, that the incestuous Person would **certainly** *be swallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow* : And since he was not thus *positive*, it is plain, that he had only a *Moral Assurance* of the Man's Sorrow and Repentance, given him by the Report of others, whom he esteem'd worthy of Credit ; and therefore the Absolution he pronounc'd, was not founded upon any infallible Knowledge that he had of that notorious Sinner's Repentance, communicated to him by virtue of the miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits. So that, since we find one of the Apostles, absolving upon moral Evidence and Proofs of Repentance, without the Assistance of this miraculous Power, their Successors may do so likewise ; because they have no less authority in that respect now, than they had then : For indeed, as there was in those Days no *absolute*

Necessity for such a *miraculous Power*, always to attend the Apostles in the Exercise of their Authority to absolve Sinners (as is plain from the Example of *St. Paul*) because their Authority was *no Consequent* of any such miraculous Gifts, but previous to them, and the Miracles were but *Occasional* and *Transient* Signs of their standing Authority, which was to remain good by virtue of Christ's Promise of Concurrence with it to the End of the World; and consequently is valid when not so attested by miraculous Gifts, which Christ *never* promis'd them should **constantly** attend their Ministrations. So in these Days there is as little need for such a miraculous Power, always to accompany the Apostles Successors, to discern *Infallibly*, the Truth of Mens Repentance, in order to their Absolution; because, both in the Apostles Days, and now, Men were, and are still bound to give Evidences of the Sincerity of their Repentance, if they would reap any Benefit from sacerdotal Ministrations; and the want of such a miraculous Power, to discern Mens Hearts, could then, and may still, be supply'd by other Means, *viz.* By strict Inquisition and Examination into their Lives; and by Tryals, Testimonies, and Evidences of the Sincerity of their Repentance; which if Men refuse to submit to, they can have no Right even to the Benefits convey'd by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which none can *profitably* partake of without sincere Repentance; and therefore, as the Authority of administering those two Sacraments, remains good and valid, without the miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits; so does the Power of absolving Penitents from their Sins.—And, if after all, there should happen to be an Error in giving Absolution to those who are unworthy of it, there's no more to be charg'd against the Authority of absolving, than there is against the Authority of administering the two Sacraments, when given to unworthy Communicants; the Error is not owing to the

Insufficiency of the *Authority*, but either to the *Personal* Neglect, &c. of him who ministers, or else to the Hypocrisy and Insincerity of the pretended Penitent, or both these together. So that tho', *Clave errante*, there is *no Absolution*; yet when both Priest and People do perform their Duty, the one by *Examining*, &c. and the other by giving *good Testimonies* of the *Sincerity* of their Repentance, Absolution must be good and valid, and can never fail of its bless'd Effects, because the Authority is Christ's, and he as much concurs with it, as he does with the right and due Administration of the Holy Sacraments, which are also Means of conveying to us the *Remission* of our Sins, upon Condition of true and unfeign'd Repentance.

I have been thus long in answering this Objection, because I know it has been too much insisted on by some, who ought rather to have defended the Authority of *Sacerdotal* Absolution, than to have laid such a *Stumbling Block* as this is, in the way of *ignorant* and *heedless People*, who are carry'd away with the seeming Plausibility of it, and the Greatness of the Reputation of those who have espoused it.—But I spare their Names, and proceed.

CHAP. III.

OF CONFESSION OF SINS TO A PRIEST.

§. I. SECONDLY, I am to prove, that Christ's giving this absolving Power to his Priests, lays an Obligation upon Men, under several Circumstances, to confess, or tell their sins to them, that they may receive the Benefit of their special and particular Absolution.

That this their Absolution is a vast and unspeakable Benefit to the Souls of Men, cannot be doubted by any one that has Faith in our Saviour's Promise, for he has given us his infallible word for it, That *Whosoever Sins they remit, they are remitted unto them*, St. John xxi. 23. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away; but his Words shall not pass away*, St. Mark xiii. 31. And consequently this his Promise of Forgiveness upon their Absolution of the Penitent, *shall never fail*. And indeed, who that has but any right Sense of the divine Goodness, can suspect his Performance of what he has so solemnly promis'd, when he also reflects on the super-abundant Mercy and Loving-Kindness of *the Apostle and great High-Priest of our Profession Christ Jesus*, in appointing Men to be his own Representatives, to supply the want of his personal Presence among us, to be the Means of conveying to us the same spiritual Benefits, as he himself would bestow on us, if he were visibly here among us?

Now, it is highly unreasonable to think, that he should constitute such *Vicarious Powers*, and give his Priests such a mighty Authority to act with Men in his stead, and at the same time require from us no Reverence, no Respect, no Duty, nor Obedience to be paid to himself by our due Application to his Delegated Authority;—'tis impossible to be true, that Christ gave His Priests Authority to forgive Sins for No Purpose, No Benefit at all; this is to detract from his infinite Wisdom, by charging him with giving an Authority not to be exercis'd, and consequently not to be submitted to, nor to have any Duty paid unto it, which is a Contradiction; since where-ever there is Authority, there must be a correspondent Duty owing to it; because where there is no Duty due, there can be no Authority; for Authority and Duty, are so inseparably connected, that one cannot possibly subsist without the other. And therefore,

since he has establish'd this Absolving Power and Authority, we must believe that he expects the Execution of it, and a suitable Duty to be paid unto it; and if so, then it must follow, that 'tis the Duty of Men under various Circumstances, to apply themselves to the Priests for the Benefit of their Absolution, and consequently to confess their Sins to them for the obtaining of it; otherwise, the Priest on the one hand, can never absolve particular Persons from their Sins, because he knows not either what he is to absolve them from, or whether they are capable of God's Pardon: and on the other hand, Men cannot rationally beg the Sacerdotal Absolution, nor receive any Comfort from it, by reason of the Priest's Ignorance of their Spiritual Condition, and his consequent Inability to give them any hopes of the good Effects of his Absolution—and so at this rate, our Saviour's Design, in giving his Ministers this absolving Power, must be utterly frustrated and made void, by Mens not confessing their Sins to them; but our Lord gave this Power that it might be put in Execution upon proper Occasions; and consequently requires Men upon such Occasions, to seek for the Benefit of it by a sincere Repentance, and Confession of their Sins to his Priests. But that this may more evidently appear, I shall give some instances, wherein the Exercise of this Power is, (besides the Benefit of Absolution) so extraordinarily advantageous to some sort of Persons in particular, that it highly contributes to the undeceiving of their Souls, in rescuing them from the Power of such dangerous Sins, as without this excellent Help might have plung'd them into everlasting Misery: And consequently it must be the Duty of such Persons at least, to apply themselves to some Discreet and Learned Priest, for the Benefit of Absolution, by a sincere and hearty Confession of their Sins to him. And,

§. II. *First*, A due Exercise of this Absolving Power, has a natural Tendency, and is a most prevalent Means, to preserve and rescue from *Black Despair*, and the Dreadful Consequences thereof, Those poor Dejected and Disconsolate Wretches, who fancy that they have sin'd themselves beyond the Power of God's Mercy, or at least, that he will not accept them to Grace and Pardon. This miserable Condition of such sort of Men, is often an Effect of their Ignorance of the true Nature of their own Sins, and of God's readiness to pardon such Sinners as they are; and hence they are discourag'd from the Prosecution of their Duty, and at last neglect even all the means of Salvation. But out of this sad and deplorable Condition, they may be deliver'd, by suing for the Sacerdotal Absolution; Because the Priest by a due and just Examination of their State, can discover such Signs and Tokens of the Truth of their Repentance (even better than they themselves can do) as to encourage them to trust in God's pardoning Mercy; to arm themselves with a Divine Faith in his Goodness towards them in particular; to lay aside their Fears, and Despondencies; and to proceed with Christian Courage and Resolution, in the discharge of their several Duties; and all this they will be the more effectually perswaded to, when they find by Experience, that God's own *Ambassador*, and *Representative*, after a fair Trial of their Spiritual State, is so well satisfied therewith, as in God's stead, and in his Name, to pronounce their Absolution:—For, from hence they are convinc'd, that God's Minister (who has no other Interest in View than the Salvation of their Souls) esteems them to be such Penitents as he himself has promis'd to accept, because, if he had any Reason to think to the contrary, he would never have presum'd to pronounce their Pardon. This gives them right Notions of themselves, and of God's Threats and Promises; so as to enable them to confide in his tender

Mercies; and henceforward, to run with Cheerfulness the way of God's Commandments. But how all this should be *effected*, without the Confession of their Sins to the Priest, is inconceivable; since without his Knowledge of their Sins, and of what they have done, or resolve to do by way of amendment, he can have no Notion of the Truth of their Repentance; nor consequently give them any encouraging Hopes of God's Mercy; and then to be sure he can never safely venture to absolve them from their Sins. But it is certainly their Duty to get rid of their Distrust of God's Goodness, and to possess themselves of such Notions of his Mercy, and their own Capacity to receive it, as may free them from the sad and deplorable State of Despairing Sinners; and therefore 'tis their Duty to prosecute all such Means as are contributory thereto, among which, this of Confessing their Sins to a Wise and Discreet Priest, for the obtaining of his Absolution, is the most effectual and prevalent, under their sad and melancholy Circumstance. And for this Reason, our Church in her first Exhortation before the Communion, advises, (and such advices from Superiours, are justly interpreted for Commands) in these Words: "*Let him come to some Discreet and Learned Minister of God's Word, and open his Grief*; i. e. declare to that Minister his Sins, which are the very Essence of his Grief, so far as to fling him almost into Despair, by disquieting his Wounded Conscience; let him then open this his whole Grief; "*That by the Ministry of God's Word, he may receive the Benefit of Absolution, together with Ghostly Counsel and Advice, to the quieting of his Conscience, and avoiding of all Scruple and Doubtfulness.* And in one of her Rubricks in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, she commands the Priest to move the sick Person, "*to make a special Confession of his Sins, if he feel his Conscience troubled with any weighty Matter*; and that

after such Confession, “ *The Priest shall Absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it.* ”

§. III. *Secondly*, A due Exercise of the Priest's Power to absolve and retain Sins, is a most powerful Antidote against Presumption, and an effectual means to rescue and preserve men, from the Damning Sin of trusting falsely in God's Mercy, while they live in wilful unrepented Wick- ednesses.

'Tis a sad and melancholy Truth, that abundance of Men are so conceited of their own Righteousness, because they do some things that have an appearance of Goodness, and it may be are really beneficial to other Persons; that notwithstanding their living in the most destructive Sins, they lay claim to Eternal Salvation, and never doubt the Happiness of their future State, but say to themselves, *Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*; and so at last incur the danger of Perishing for ever in this fatal Delusion. And the Cause of such their miserable Condition, may justly be said to arise from hence, that they are destitute of True and Faithful Monitors, and are never rebuked for their particular Sins: But when Men have a true Sense of the Sacerdotal Power of Absolution, and apply themselves diligently to receive the Benefit thereof, then the Cause of their Delusion is presently remov'd, because the Priest by his strict Enquiry into their Qualifications for Pardon, puts them in mind of such things as they never thought of before; and by the Exactness of his Examination, their Sins which they formerly disregarded, are now brought to their remembrance, and they acknowledge and bewail their Guilt. Thus their false Confidences in their own partial Righteousness, which they were so full of before, are now remov'd, and they no longer presume on God's Mercy, while they live in the Commission of wilful Sin.

But this is the bless'd Effect of their suing to the Priest for the Benefit of his Absolution: And when they do seek for it, it will be unavoidably necessary for them to confess their Sins to him, because without their Confession, he can never determine whether they are qualify'd or no, for so great a Comfort; he can never discover to them the false Ground of their unwarrantable Trust in God's Mercy, nor teach them wherein they have been particularly guilty of that dreadful Sin, and so cannot rescue them from the dangerous Consequences that must necessarily follow their Commission of it, without a sincere and hearty Repentance.

It is not enough to say, that all this may be done by a due Attention to the preaching of God's Word,—for how many Thousands are there, who are so very Ignorant, that they can hardly apply any thing that is said to 'em in Sermons, to their own particular Circumstances? And for those that have more Knowledge, and can make due Applications of what they hear, how often may they attend Sermons, and yet never hear their particular Sins, and the Guilt of them press'd home upon their own Consciences? And indeed, how is it possible for Preachers to reach every individual Man's Sins, and all the Circumstances of them, only in publick Sermons? Doubtless God gave them the Power of Absolving, that they might have a nearer access to Men's Consciences, than they can have in publick; that they might more effectually be enabled to save Men from their more close and secret Sins, by a more intimate and particular Cognizance of them, and a more immediate and distinct Instruction relating to them, than can possibly be given in General Discourses before a whole Congregation:—And therefore our Church, in one of her Rubricks, in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, requires that the Priest “*Shall Examine, whether the sick Person repent him*

“*truly of his Sins.* Surely this Examination does not consist in a bare asking him whether he does truly Repent; the Design of the Church can never be answer’d by putting such a single, and general Question to the Sinner, who no doubt will reply in as general Terms, that he does truly repent.—Can it be just to call this an *Examination* of his Repentance? And is it reasonable to believe, that the Priest can, upon any good Foundation, treat every such Respondent, as a true Penitent? When Experience daily demonstrates, that many such Ignorant Wretches will tell you, that they Repent of *all their Sins*, tho’ at the same time, they know *nothing* of some particular grievous Sins which they have been guilty of, and consequently cannot be said to Repent of them: For the Truth of this I appeal to those Reverend and truly charitable Priests, who have in good earnest examin’d the Repentance of some poor Creatures upon a Sick-bed, and have been obliged with great Pains and Industry to search the Consciences, and to inform the Judgments of such Persons, before they could make them *sensible* of their Sins, and of that true Repentance which God requires for them.—Our Church then designs by this Rubrick, That the Priest shall not satisfy himself, by barely asking the sick Person in general Terms, whether he Truly repents him of his Sins; but that he should *Examine, i. e.* search and try his Repentance, that he may preserve him from that eternal Misery which is due to the Impenitent: And this can never be done to any purpose, without making the Sinner sensible of his Offences, or by putting such Questions to him as may oblige him in Answer, to acknowledge his particular Sins, that the Priest may have some competent Knowledge of the Truth of his Repentance, and consequently communicate to him such Spiritual Blessings, as God has authoriz’d him to administer to True Penitents, among which, that of *Sacerdotal Absolution* is

doubtless one of the greatest, since God himself has promis'd to confirm it, to all those who truly repent them of their Sins.

§. IV. *Thirdly*, Another great Benefit, which Men receive from a due Exercise of the Priest's Power to *Absolve* and *Retain* Sins, is, that Notorious Sinners who have been Excommunicated from all the Spiritual Privileges of Christ's Church, are hereby restor'd to all those Blessed Advantages, by being receiv'd again into the Number of the Faithful. Some Men may make as light as they please of the Power of Excommunication; but others who have a right Sense of Things, do know, that when 'tis justly Executed, 'tis the most dreadful Punishment that can possibly be inflicted on those Souls who are not finally consign'd to Eternal Torments; 'tis in our Saviour's Language, the putting of a Man into the State and Condition of a *Heathen* and a *Publican*, and thereby making his Company to be as much detested and avoided by Christians, as the Conversation of Heathens and Publicans was by the ancient Jews; 'tis the Retaining and Binding of his Sins upon him: And in St. *Paul's* Dialect, 'tis the Cutting him off, *i. e.* from the Church, which is the Family and Household of God, and the delivering him over unto *Satan*, and consequently to the Power of the rest of the Apostate Angels. This Authority of Binding and Retaining Men's Sins, was given to the Apostles and their Successors, and such as they should vest with it, by Christ himself; for says he, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven*; and *whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained*. Which is not only a Grant of Authority, but also a Promise of Ratifying and Confirming in Heaven, whatsoever should be justly Executed on Earth by Virtue thereof;

which makes the Case of justly Excommunicated Persons, to be so miserable, that God himself, Binds their Sins on them, (when the Priest retains them) and will by no means Absolve them, without their Repentance and due Application to obtain the *Sacerdotal Remission*: For, since God's own Representative has justly Bound their Sins upon them, the Divine Veracity has engag'd that they shall be Bound also in Heaven; and therefore, God himself will not alter the Sentence, so long as the Delinquents lie justly under it: And they are justly liable to this Condemnation, till they Repent, and sue for the Priestly Absolution; because, without Repentance, there is no Pardon for Sin, and while they obstinately refuse to sue for the Priest's Remission, their Sins are still retain'd, because not Absolv'd by the Priest; and consequently God, who concurs with the just Sentence of his Priests, does continue to retain their Sins.

Hence we see, how necessary 'tis for such notorious Sinners to sue for the *Sacerdotal Absolution*, that they may be loos'd from those Sins for which they were Excommunicated, and so receiv'd again into the Communion of the Church, and consequently into God's Grace and Favour. But this they cannot obtain, without so confessing their Guilt, as that the Priest may be sensible of their Repentance; and he can never have any Notion of their Repentance, if they do not make known to him their acknowledgment of their Guilt; so that, they must express their Repentance by Confessing to the Priest their Guilt; and consequently they must in that Confession, acknowledge to him the Sin or Sins of which they confess themselves Guilty;—and therefore 'tis the Duty of such Excommunicated Persons, to confess those Sins to the Priest for which they were cast out of the Church, that they may, by

Virtue of his Absolution, be loos'd from them, and receiv'd again into her Fellowship and Communion.

§. V. In the *Mosaic* Dispensation, the power of determining the Legal *Cleanness* or *Uncleanness* of Persons and Things, was committed by God himself to the Priests, to prefigure that more Spiritual Authority, which he afterwards gave to all Christian Priests to Absolve and retain Sins: Thus 'twas the Jewish Priests Office to Examine the suspected Leprous Person, and as he found his Plague, to pronounce him either Clean, or Unclean, *Levit. xiii, 14*. But the supposed Leper was to be brought to the Priest, and to submit to the Strictness of his Search, and Scrutiny into the Nature of his Scab: Even so, 'tis the peculiar Office of the Christian Priest, to Examine the *Spiritual Leper*, in order to the pronouncing of him Spiritually Clean, or unclean; *i. e.* in order to the absolving of him from his Spiritual Leprosy, his Sins, or else to retain them, till he has given sufficient Proofs of his Repentance. This necessarily infers, that the Sinner must submit to the Priest's Examination of his Conscience; and consequently, that he must confess the State and Condition thereof to the Priest, in order to his Purification.

The first Converts to Christianity, were so sensible of this Duty, that 'tis recorded of them in the Sacred Oracles, that "*Many who believed, came and confessed and shewed their Deeds*, Acts xix. 18.—And *Sapphira*, the wife of *Ananias*, persisting in her Hypocrisy, and not acknowledging her Sin to St. *Peter*, when he charg'd her saying, "*Tell me whether ye sold the Land for so much*, Acts v. 8. was punish'd with an immediate miraculous Death, as well for not confessing her and her Husband's Sin, as for the Sin it self; the Punishment of which she might have escap'd, if she had but repented and confess'd her Sin to St. *Peter* when he requir'd her.

§. VI. *Fourthly*, The last Circumstance I shall mention, wherein Men ought to confess their Sins to a Priest, is that of Sickness:—And for this, the Holy Ghost, in the General Epistle of St. *James*, cap. v. 14, 15, 16. commands thus; “*Is any Sick among you? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil in the Name of the Lord: And the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed Sins, they shall be forgiven him:—Confess your Faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.*—And then in the 17th Verse he gives an Instance of the Efficacy of *Elias* the Prophet’s Prayer. What I shall say as to this Command of the Holy Ghost, will, I doubt not, be call’d *Popery*, as many of the Essentials of Christianity are call’d by the *Libertines* and *Latitudinarians* of our Age, which has a mighty Effect upon some ignorant People, who do not see into the bottom of those Revilers Designs.—But let them say what they will, this Passage of the Holy Scriptures requires some Now Neglected and despis’d Duties, which the primitive Christians, long before Christianity was corrupted by the Innovations of *Popery*, thought themselves oblig’d in Conscience to perform; among which, this of Confession of Sins to a Priest was one; and the Uncction of the Sick with Oil, was another; the Benefit of which Anointing, with respect to the spiritual Design thereof, is certainly as necessary to us now, as it was to those in the purest Ages of Christianity; and so our first Reformers thought, who retain’d this Apostolic Rite and Ceremony in our *English* Liturgy, in the Reign of King *Edward* the VIth. But that the Reader may see, that this Passage of St. *James* requires the sick Person to confess his Sins to

the Priest, let him consult the learned Dr. *Hammond's* Paraphrase and Annotations upon the Place, and he will find, that the Sick must send for the Bishop, or whosoever is by, or under him ordain'd, for such Offices as the giving of spiritual Directions and Counsel to enable the Sick to discern his own Guilts ;—that if upon Examination he be found to have committed any wasting Sin, or Sins, 'tis useful that the sick Person first fit himself for, and then receive Absolution from the Bishop, or other Minister ordain'd by him, which is the Sense of the latter Part of the fifteenth Verse ; “ *If he have committed Sins, they shall be forgiven him ;* “ or, as the Original has it, “ *Absolution or Remission shall be given him.* And then 'tis added in our *English*, ver. 16. *Confess your Faults one to another :* But the King's *Greek* Manuscript connects these to the foregoing Words, and says, *Confess therefore your Sins one to another ; i. e.* for that Reason, that Absolution and Remission may be given you who are sick, *Confess your Sins one to another.* The only thing to be question'd here, is, whether Confessing *one to another*, signifies Confessing to the Person who visits the Sick ; or whether it means, only acknowledging to our Neighbours our Faults committed against them.—Now, tho' I will not deny, but that these words may be taken in this latter Sense, because the Acknowledgment of Wrongs done to our Neighbours, and asking their Pardon, and making them Restitution, if we are able, is certainly a necessary Qualification for that Absolution which the Sick is to receive from the Elder or Bishop, &c. Yet, that this is not the Only, nor indeed the Primary or chief Design of the words I must assert, from their immediate Connection to the preceding words, which require the Priestly Absolution ; and this Duty of *Confessing one to another*, being added with a *Therefore*, shews the Reason why the Sick must confess, *viz.* That he may

obtain the Absolution of his Spiritual Visitor before spoken of;—and then to whom the Confession must be made, for this Absolution, is plain by this, *One to another*; One is the sick Person who is to confess, *Another* is the Minister of Christ, who is to receive the Confession: For, this Minister is call'd to the Sick for his spiritual Benefit; this Minister is the *only Person* which the *Text* supposes to be present at the Examination of the sick Man's Conscience; For indeed, it cannot be proper that any other should then be present at so weighty an Enquiry and Scrutiny; this Minister is the only *Another* Person then present, that has Power from Christ to Forgive or Absolve Penitents; and therefore the word *Another* must be referr'd to the spiritual Elder before spoken of in the Text; and consequently by *Confessing one to Another*, in this Place, must mean the Sick to the Priest: This is confirm'd by the following Context, "*And Pray One for Another, that ye may be healed.*" Which still has a Reference to the sick Person and the Elder, and signifies, that the Minister must pray for the Sick, that he *may be Healed*; for, as an Encouragement to this Duty of the Minister, and to strengthen both his and the sick Man's Faith, the Holy Ghost adds "*The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, availeth much*; i. e. the Prayer of such a Man of God, as the Elder before spoken of, availeth much;—in Witness whereof, he, in the next words, gives us an Instance of the Efficacy of the Prayers of *Elias*, the *Authorized Prophet* and Man of God, who was a righteous Man; and thereby explains what is meant by the righteous Man before mentioned, *viz.* A Holy Authoriz'd Minister, a Man of God, such as the Elder or Bishop, &c. who is call'd to pray for the sick Person. Thus every Part of this Text of St. *James*, has a necessary Reference to the Elder and the Sick, who calls for him; and therefore, when 'tis said,

Confess your Faults one to another, 'tis meant, that the Sick should confess to the Priest, except the Opposers will have the Priest to make his Confession to the Sick; for there are no other Persons mention'd to confess, and to be confess'd to. St. *Peter* in his first Epistle, *cap. v. 5.* commands us thus. "*All of you be subject one to another* ; the Context determines the Meaning of this "*One to another*, by the Persons there spoken of; for in the first part of the Verse, the Apostle says, "*Ye Younger, submit your selves unto the Elder* ;" and then immediately adds, "*Yea, all of you be subject one to another* ;" that is, *all of you Younger before-nam'd, be subject to your Elders above-mentioned* ; or all of you be subject *One* (that is, the Younger) to *Another*, that is, the Elder. So when 'tis said, "*Confess therefore your Sins one to another*, the Context must determine who must confess, and who must be confess'd to, by the Persons therein mention'd, and they are no other than the Sick and the Elder; and therefore the Sick must confess his Faults, and this Confession must be made to the Elder, *i. e.* the Bishop or Priest: or, *Confess your Faults One, i. e.* the Sick, *to Another* ; *i. e.* the spiritual Elder. Upon the whole, When St. *James* commands us to *confess one to another*, he means no other, than that we must confess to another who has Power and Authority to receive our Confession, and that is the Priest, who has the Power of Absolution;—just as St. *Peter's* Command, that we must *all be subject one to another*, means that we must pay Subjection to those to whom 'tis due, *i. e.* our Superiours.

But to conclude this Head; tho' it should (contrary to all Reason) be allow'd, that the Letter of this Command "*confess your Faults one to another*, related only to that Confession which should be made to our Neighbour, of the Wrongs we have done him; yet still it will follow by

parity of Reason, that Confession ought to be made to God's Minister;—For, if I must in some Cases, confess to my Neighbour, the Wrongs I have done him, it must be upon this Foundation, that 'tis in his Power to pardon me those Wrongs upon some Conditions, and in some Degree or other; else what need of confessing to him, and why should God enjoin us this Duty; Our Saviour requires us, that if *our Brother trespass against us, and repent, we should forgive him*, St. Luke xvii. 3. This shews, that the Wronged have Power to forgive; and this Power of Forgiving, is the Motive and Foundation upon which the Trespasser repents and confesses his Faults to him. From hence arises this Maxim, That Wrongs committed, must in some Cases be confess'd to those who have a Power of Pardoning, and Absolving from the Penalties due to those Wrongs; otherwise what signifies their Pardoning Power, if no Confession be due to it? And therefore, the Sins we have committed against God, ought to be confess'd to his *Proxies* and *Representatives*, whom he hath vested with *his own Authority to absolve* us from all our Sins, and in his stead to insure and seal our Pardons, upon due Evidence of our Repentance.

But not to be any farther prolix upon this Subject, I proceed to prove,

CHAP. IV.

OF PENANCE.

§. I. THIRDLY, That Sinners are bound to submit to all the prudent and lawful Injunctions which the Church, *i. e.* the spiritual Governours thereof, shall lay on them by way of Penance, for the Mortification of their Sins.

This will necessarily follow from that Power and Authority, which Bishops and Priests have to Absolve and Retain Sins; for Absolution cannot be given but upon proper Evidences of Repentance: and when those Evidences are not only wanting, but the contrary Affections to some grievous Sins discover themselves, then 'tis time to interpose the spiritual Authority of Retaining those Sins, till the Sinner gives sufficient Testimony of his penitential Abhorrence and Detestation of them; the way to oblige him to this, when all other gentler Means fail, is by Excommunication and delivering him unto *Satan*; the Effect of which is, 1st. *"The depriving the Offender of those daily Means which are in Christianity afforded, and ordinarily used to eject Satan and the Power of his Kingdom out of the Heart; such are the Prayers of the Church, the publick Use of the Word of God, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And, 2dly, "In the Apostles times, there was a sad Consequence of this Excommunication, viz. Corporal Power and Possession, and Inflictions of Satan, on those who were deliver'd up to him, to the Destruction of the Flesh; i. e. to the inflicting bodily Dis-eases on the Sinner, (Hammond on 1 Cor. v. 5.) That the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.* This was a dreadful Punishment, and the most severe

Penance that could be inflicted ; and that the Apostles, and other spiritual Governours of the Church, had Power to lay it on Sinners, to put them to a Necessity of Reforming their Lives, is abundantly evident from 1 *Cor.* v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Verses.—And tho' this corporal Infliction of Diseases and Torments is not now the visible Effect of Excommunication, yet still the spiritual Effect of being depriv'd of the means of Salvation, by being cut off from any Participation in the Prayers of the Church, in the publick use of God's word, and in the Reception of the blessed Sacrament, remains as firm as in the Apostles' Days ; and exposes the Sinner to the spiritual, and therefore more dangerous Assaults of the invisible Powers of Darkness, than the Infliction of those bodily Torments and Diseases were ; for hereby he is depriv'd of all Communion with God, and consequently of all that spiritual Armour and Defence, whereby the Members of the Church are enabled to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil : The Power of inflicting this heavy Penance, is still in the spiritual Governours of the Church ; Because the Church is the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, and the Governours thereof are his Vicegerents, as having their Commission convey'd to them, only from him their spiritual Sovereign, without the Interposition of any secular worldly Powers whatsoever ; and therefore they must have sufficient spiritual Authority for the Government of this spiritual Kingdom, otherwise, their being made his Representatives, in being *sent by him, even as he was sent by his Father*, and having the Stewardship of his word and Sacraments committed to them, would be to no purpose at all ; and so all Men in the Church would be levell'd to an Equality, and consequently every the most profligate Sinner have an equal Right to all the external Privileges that belong to the obedient Members of this spiritual Society ; and in consequence of this, all the divine

Mysteries of our most holy Religion, must be prostituted and expos'd, to the vile Profanations of the most impudent and most incorrigible Sinners, without any Remedy for such daring, such monstrous Wickedness. But this is so egregiously opposite to all the Designs of Christianity, that, only to mention it, is sufficient to shew, not only the Impiety, but also the very Inconsistency and Contradiction thereof; and therefore the *Spiritual Vicegerents* of our Lord Jesus Christ, must have sufficient Power and Authority to rule and govern his Church, and consequently to inflict the Penance of Excommunication on notorious Offenders, for their Reformation, and for a Terror to all others; without which, the Ends of Spiritual Government can never be obtain'd, nor the Power of binding and loos-ing, of absolving and retaining Sins, wherewith our Lord has vested the Governours of his Church, be of any Use or Benefit whatsoever.

§. II. Seeing then, that the Spiritual Governours of the Church have Power and Authority to inflict this utmost and severest Penance for the Mortification of Sin, it must needs be, that they have Authority to enjoin all such lower degrees of Penance as have a tendency to the mortification of Sin; and which when submitted to, are declarative of the sincerity of the Sinner's Repentance, and of no Worldly Benefit or Advantage to the Imposer of them: Because (here being no room for suspicion of secular Interest in our spiritual Governours imposing such Penances) their Authority for that which is most, includes Authority for what is less; their Power to enjoin the greatest, includes and necessarily contains their Authority to require a less Penance, when it is subservient to the Ends of spiritual Government, the Restoration of lost and undone Sinners.

For this Reason, our Lord requires, in the Case of a

Brother's Trespassing against us, that when we cannot reclaim him, by making him give us reasonable Satisfaction, we must *tell it to the Church*, i. e. the governing Part of it; and that "*if he neglect to hear the Church, he should be to us as an Heathen Man, and a Publican* ; that is, he should be excluded our Communion, and abandon'd our Society and Conversation, St. *Matt.* xviii. 17. Wherein 'tis evident, that Christ requires the offending Brother's *Submission* to the Award and Determination of the Governours of the Church; and this Award can be nothing less than a Penance to the Offender, be it either to acknowledge his Fault, or to make any Restitution to his wronged Brother;—and upon his neglecting to submit to this Penance, our Lord requires to set a Mark of Infamy on him; and promises in the next words, "*Whatsoever* (upon such Accounts as these) *ye*, [the Governours of the Church] *shall Bind on Earth, shall be Bound in Heaven*, Verse 18.—i. e. Whomsoever (thus neglecting your Determinations) you shall cast out of the Church on Earth, shall, without Repentance, and Submission to your Censures, and Reformation upon them, and sincere Desire to reconcile and approve themselves to you, be by Me, excluded from Heaven:—These Censures of yours inflicted by this Commission from me, shall be back'd by Me; (*Hammond* on the Place). And further, that this Authority of imposing wholesome Penance upon Sinners, might not be precarious and uncertain, as to the Persons who should exercise it, and the Extent of their Power, our Saviour tells his Apostles, "*When the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*, St. *Mat.* xix. 28. Thereby making them and their Successors the Bishops, his spiritual Viceroys, enthroning them in their Episcopal Chairs, which the Scripture here, and the Primitive Christians in confor-

mity thereto, call Thrones, and giving them Power and Authority to be the supreme spiritual Rulers and Judges over his whole spiritual Kingdom, the Church Militant represented here by the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, and therefore to judge and censure Sinners, and in proportion to their Crimes, to enjoin them greater or lesser Penances, proper for the effecting of their Reformation and Amendment. I say, our Lord here, gives the spiritual Princes and Judges of his Church, Power to inflict *greater and lesser Penances* in proportion to Mens Sins; for this Reason, Because, otherwise, (since they have Authority to impose the greatest Penance) they would have it in their Power either to punish all Sins of what Degree soever, but *with one only, and that the severest Penance*, which is absurd; or else not at all to punish any other *than the most notorious and flagitious Wickednesses*, and so all other Sins to go and remain uncensur'd and unreform'd, which is equally ridiculous, as being utterly contrary to all the Ends and Designs of any supreme Power of Judicature whatsoever.

§. III. There is then Authority in the Bishops of the Church, to appoint greater and lesser Penances in proportion to Mens Sins; and consequently there must be the like, tho' not equal Power in the Priests, who receive it from, and exercise it in Subordination to their Bishops:— But what these Penances are, and when they shall be prescribed, is left to the Wisdom and Prudence of our spiritual Governours, always provided, that they be such *Only* as are suitable to the Ends of spiritual Government, which was instituted purely to reconcile rebellious Sinners to their offended God, and to keep them in due Subjection and Obedience to his divine Will and Pleasure, that they may obtain eternal Life.

I shall not go about to prove, That the Penances of

abstaining for some time from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; of Fasting and Watching; of Abstinence and Self-Denial; of refraining the Company of our beloved Companions, and the forsaking of our profitable Employments, when they are the Cause of our Sins; of Restitution and Satisfaction to our Neighbours for Wrongs done them; of extraordinary alms to the poor and indigent, when we know not to whom to make Restitution; of publick Acknowledging and Revocation of our Wickednesses, and the like: I say, I shall not go about to prove, that these Penances are directly instrumental to the Ends of spiritual Government, they have been always thought so, and enjoin'd and practis'd as such, by the best of Men in all Ages: And therefore there's no Reason to question, that the Governours of the Church have Power and Authority to enjoin them, since some of 'em are Duties, whether they require them or no; and others of them are proper Deletories and Remedies for Sin, and significant Evidences and Signs and Tokens of Repentance.

§. IV. Hence our Church, in the Preface to her Office for *Ashwednesday*, call'd the *Commination*, tells us, that, "*In the primitive Church there was a godly Discipline; that at the beginning of Lent, such Persons as stood convicted of notorious Sin, were put to open Penance, and punish'd in this World, that their Souls might be saved in the Day of the Lord; and that others admonish'd by their Example, might be the more afraid to offend: And then wishes that, the said Discipline may be restored again: Which, would to God she would not only wish, but exert her utmost Power to restore, for the Good and Welfare of Mens Souls, which languish and perish, for want of such spiritual Correctives: Something towards this she does enjoin and require of us, in her*

appointed Days of Fasting and Abstinence, which she commands us to observe;—and in her requiring every Parish Priest to observe these following Rules with respect to wicked Persons, who offer to come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,—viz. *“If any of those be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any Wrong to his Neighbours, by Word or Deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended, the Curate having Knowledge thereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he hath openly declar'd himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty Life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompens'd the Parties to whom he hath done Wrong, or at least declare himself to be in full purpose so to do as soon as he conveniently may.”*

“The same Order shall the Curate use with those betwixt whom he perceiveth Malice and Hatred to reign, Not suffering them to be made Partakers of the Lord's Table, until he know them to be reconciled. And if one of the Parties so at Variance be content to forgive, from the bottom of his Heart, all that the other hath trespassed against him, and to make amends for that he hath offended; and the other Party will not be perswaded to a godly Unity, but remain still in his Frowardness and Malice; the Minister in that Case, ought to admit the penitent Person to the Holy Communion, and Not him that is Obstinate. Provided that every Minister so Repelling any,—shall be oblig'd to give an Account of the same to the Ordinary, within fourteen days at the farthest: And the Ordinary shall proceed against the offending Person, according to the Canon. Thus the Priests of our Church have Authority

not only to repel some notorious Offenders, from the Table of the Lord, but also to enjoin them the Penance of *Openly declaring their Repentance* ; and consequently of publicly acknowledging their former Guilt. And in her Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, Canon 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 59, 72, 73, 75, 76, 79, 93, 94, 97, 108, 109, 110, 114, 121, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141.—She threatens Sinners of several sorts with Excommunication ; that they shall not be restor'd until they repent, and publicly revoke their Wickedness ; that some of them shall suffer Deprivation, and others Suspension, &c. according to their several Demerits ; all which are Penances grievous to Flesh and Blood, but yet wholesome and necessary for the Reformation of Mens Lives, to oblige them to evidence their Repentance, and make it as conspicuous as their Sins were heinous, and to be a Terror and Dread to all others, that they may escape the divine Wrath and Vengeance. But *O Tempora ! O Mores !* how fearful is that Account which some must give to the All-seeing Judge of Heaven and Earth, for hindering, and others for neglecting the Observation and due Execution of these just and wholesome Penances ; by reason of which Obstruction, and want of spiritual Discipline, many are now suffer'd to eat and drink their own Damnation, by being admitted (reeking as they are in their abominable Sins) to the tremendous Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our crucified Saviour !

§. V. But spiritual Rebellion is now grown Triumphant, and threatens the Destruction of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, we are now so far from being what *Libertines* call *Priest-Ridden*, that we are endeavouring to subject the Priest's Authority to the vile and base Humour of the *Beasts of the People*. We are not only disobedient to the Laws of the

Church, and kick and spurn at her holy Discipline ; we not only refuse to submit to her Medicinal Correctives and Remedies for Sin ; but we impudently force her sacred Fences, and compel the Dispensers of the divine Mysteries, to give *that which is Holy unto the Dogs*, and to cast their Pearls before such *Swine* as trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rend and tear even the Body of Christ, his holy Spouse the Church, by their avow'd Schisms and Separations and resisting and using their utmost Endeavours to destroy and make void, the Authority of our Lord conferr'd by him on his Priests and Ministers.

But let us not be deceiv'd, God is not mock'd ; *He that despises them, despises him*, and he will certainly punish all Contemners of his Authority committed to them, with a Vengeance answerable to their daring Impiety. For, as *Samuel* told *Saul*, who disobey'd the Divine Command laid on him by the Prophet of God—*Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 23. And therefore *St. Jude* pronounces concerning those *who despise Dominion*, “ *Wo unto them ;—* “ *they have perish'd in the gainsaying of Corah ;—to* “ *them is reserv'd the Blackness of Darkness for ever*, Ep. of *St. Jude*, Verses 8. 11. and 13.

§. VI. On the other hand, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and to Harken, than the Fat of Rams*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22. And God has given us a very remarkable Instance of his great Value and Esteem thereof, by causing the Obedience of the House of the *Rechabites*, who abstain'd from drinking Wine, Building or having of Houses, sowing Seed, and Planting, or having Vineyards, at the Command of their Father *Jonadab*, to be recorded, and stand as an everlasting Memorial in the Sacred Oracles, for our Example ; and not only so, but he highly Rewards this their

Self-denial, and Submission to their Father's Will; commanding his Prophets to tell the *Rechabites*, "*Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, because you have obey'd the Commandment of Jonadab your Father, and kept all his Precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the Son of Rechab, shall not want a Man to stand before me for ever*, Jer. xxxv. 18, 19. This necessarily implies, that it was their Duty to obey that Command of their Father, tho' it did intrench upon what our Sons of *Belial* will call their **Liberty and Property**; for they **Obeys'd the Commandment** of their Father; 'tis not said, they comply'd with his Request, no, they were *Commanded* this Self-denial, and because 'twas the Command of their Father, therefore they held themselves bound and oblig'd to Obey it; and God himself highly extols and rewards their Obedience.

Since then, 'tis the Duty of Children to submit to and obey the Commands of their Natural Parents, with relation to things otherwise Indifferent, even in Cases, which, it may be, have no tendency to the Childrens spiritual Advantage, but are enjoyn'd them probably for temporal Ends and Purposes only, and yet oblige them to several Acts of Self-denial and Mortification, as in the Example here before us: Much more must it be the Duty of Christians to subject themselves to the wise and prudent Injunctions of their Spiritual Parents, the Stewards of the Mysteries of God, who Regenerate them mediately into a State of Salvation, by Baptism, which is a Benefit infinitely beyond what their Natural Birth could entitle them to; and who nourish their Souls unto Eternal Life, by the Ministration of the Word, and Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which infinitely excels any the best support and mainte-

nance administred to them by their Natural Parents as such—and who farther, have Authority from God himself, to absolve them from their Spiritual Lapses when Repented of, and to restore them to the Divine Favour, which their Natural Parents cannot possibly do by Virtue of such their Paternity: Much more, I say, must it be the Duty of Christians to submit to and obey the wholesome Commands of these Spiritual Fathers and Guides of Souls, when they are such as are effectual to the mortification of Sin, and have no other aim and design, than their necessary Reformation, and eternal Salvation: For, as the excellency of Persons and Things, which have a Relation to what is Supernatural and Eternal, exceeds and is superior to, the Excellency of such Persons and Things, as relate to what is but Natural and Temporal: So our obligation of Obedience and Submission, with respect to the former, is more Binding than our Duty, which relates to the latter: Our Lord himself confirms this, by affirming concerning such as would follow him; “*If any man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple*, St. Luke xiv. 26. *i. e.* He cannot be my Disciple, if he does not in comparison of me, hate them, or chuse to leave them for my sake, when his Affection to them, stands in competition with his Duty to me.

§. VII. To conclude this Head; tho’ *Atheists, Deists, and Libertines*, and all the scandalous Club of the Sons of *Belial*, Priest-haters, Enthusiasts, Schismatics, and Heretics, belch out their Poysonous and Diabolical Blasphemies, and Rave against our Lord’s Divine Institution of the Christian Priesthood, and the unalienable Rights and Powers thereof, and particularly the Church’s Authority to

Retain Sins, and ordain wholesome Remedies and suitable Penances for them ; These are most certain Truths, “ *That Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,*” 1 Cor. xv. 50.—“ *That if we live after the Flesh, we shall die,*” Rom. viii. 13. i. e. We shall die to eternal Happiness, and live in everlasting Misery.—That we must therefore “ *Mortifie the Deeds of the Body,*” Rom. viii. 13. “ *and crucifie our Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts,*” Gal. v. 24. That, “ *If our right Eye* (i. e. any thing as dear to us, as that is) “ *offend us,* (i. e. cause us to sin) “ *we must pluck it out and cast it from us ; and if our right hand offend us, we must cut it off, and cast it from us ; for it is profitable for us, that one of our Members should perish, and not that our whole Body should be cast into Hell,*” St. Matt. v. 29, 30. In short, we must “ *Deny our selves, and take up our Cross, to follow Christ,*” S. Matt. xvi. 24. And all those who are ignorant, or forgetful of the time and manner of performing these great and necessary Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, and, O how unspeakably great is their Number ! are bound to attend to, and diligently observe and obey, the prudent Instructions, and salutary Injunctions of those Spiritual Guides whom God has set over them, “ *to open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan, unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them that are Sanctified,*” &c. Acts xxvi. 18. For which Blessed Ends, such Spiritual Guides have Authority to “ *shew unto them that they should repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance,*” Verse 20. And if Sinners do not know, they must learn what these Works are, and submit to the authoriz’d Guides of their Souls, when they teach and require them to perform them.

§. VIII. For, says the Holy Ghost, "*Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, for that is Unprofitable for you,*" Heb. xiii. 17. This lays an Obligation upon us both to obey, and submit to, the Spiritual Governours of the Church; Obedience is no more than *Doing* the Lawful *Things* they command: But SUBMISSION implies much more, for 'tis an abasing or bringing down; a humbling, or putting under; and therefore signifies that we must abase and bring down our proud and false Understandings; and make our aspiring, conceited, but pretended Reasons, to humble and subject themselves to the *Authority commanding*, and necessarily presupposes, that the Thing enjoyn'd is very likely to meet with the oppositions of Flesh and Blood, and all those false Arguings which Men naturally betake themselves to, that they may avoid the displeasing Discipline which the Governours of the Church have Authority to impose on them, for the mortification of their sinful Lusts and Passions: And the Reason why we must thus submit, is, because *They watch for our Souls, as they that must give Account*; they have the Spiritual Guardianship and Oversight of our Souls; they are the authoriz'd Inspectors and Monitors, the Guides, and Directors, to whose Care and Government God has committed us: and of this their great Trust, they must give an Account to him, who expects, and will require of them a diligent and faithful discharge of their Duty, and will most certainly punish all those who hinder or refuse to submit to their due Execution thereof, in appointing proper Correctives for Sin, and Exemplary Tokens and Signs of true Repentance; the want of the same being not only *unprofitable*, but also very mischievous and

destructive to the Health and safety of our Immortal Souls, as Experience abundantly demonstrates from the dreadful Desolation which we see Christianity now reduc'd to, over the Face of the whole Earth.

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VOICE
OF
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
ON
CONFESSION.

"Whoso confesseth his sins, and forsaketh them shall have mercy."
PROVERBS xxviii. 13.

"Better be ashamed here, than confounded hereafter."
JER. TAYLOR.

NEW-YORK:
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THE
VOICE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
AS TO CONFESSION.

Exhortation
preparatory
to the Holy
Communion.

“If any cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned

Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God’s holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice.”

Absolution in
office Visita-
tion of the
Sick.

“Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great

mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Ordinal of
the American
Church.

“Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and

whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.”

End of Exhortation in Edward VI. First Prayer Book.

“ Requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession, not to be offended with them, that do use to their further satisfying the auricular and secret confession to a Priest.” *A Book said by Parliament (A. D. 1548) to have been issued under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.*

TESTIMONY OF ANGLICAN FATHERS.

JOHN DONNE.—PRIEST AND DOCTOR.

Born 1553. Ordained Priest 1621. Dean of St. Paul's 1624. Died 1631.

Sermon 58.
Ed. 1640.

“ *Confitebor domino*, says David—*I will confess my sins unto the Lord.* Confession is directed upon God, though it be made to His Minister. If God had appointed His Angels or Saints to absolve me, I would confess to them. Joshua took not the jurisdiction out of God's hand when he said to Achan,

Josh. vii. 19. ‘ *My son give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto Him, and tell me now what thou hast done.*’—The law of the leper is,

Lev. xiv. 2. ‘ *He shall be brought unto the Priest.*’— * *

Men come not willingly to this manifestation of themselves, yet, the more I find Confession or any other religious practice, to be against myself, and repugnant to mine own nature, the further I will go into it, for still the *adversum me* is *cum DEO.*”

Sermon 56. "To the making of a perfect and entire penitence, we acknowledge that there belongs a Contrition, a Confession, and a Satisfaction—* *. And for Confession, we deny not a necessity to confess to man. There may be many cases of scruple, of perplexity, where it were an exposing ourselves to further occasions of sin, not to confess to man."

JOHN COSIN.—BISHOP.

Born 1594. Dean of Peterborough 1640. Bishop of Durham 1661.
Died 1671.

Devotions. "The Precepts of the Church are these, 1. To observe, &c. 5. To receive the B. Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ with frequent devotion. * * —and for better preparation thereto, as occasion is, to disburden and quiet our consciences of those sins that may grieve us, or scruples that may trouble us, to a learned and discreet Priest, and from him to receive advice and the benefit of absolution."

Again, having asked whether the above precept hath been urged upon the people by the Parish Priest, he next inquires, "If any man, being sick or well, useth to confess his secret and hidden sins to the Priest, doth the said Priest reveal, or hath he at any time revealed or made known to any person whatsoever any crime or offence committed to his trust and secrecy, contrary to the 113th Canon of the Church of England?"

Articles of
Inquiry in his
Archidiacon-
ry. Art. 27.

HUGH LATIMER.—BISHOP.

Born 1470. Bishop of Worcester 1535. Burned 1555.

Sermon. Ed.
London, 1824.
Vol. II. p. 398.

“To speak of right and true confession, I would to God it were kept in England, for it is a good thing. And those that find themselves grieved in conscience might go to a learned man, and there fetch of him comfort of the Word of God, and so come to a quiet conscience, which is better and more to be regarded than all the riches of the world. And sure it grieveth me much that such confessions are not kept in England.

USHER.—ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

Born 1580. Died 1656.

Answer to
a Jesuit. Art.
Confession.

“Be it therefore known that no kind of confession, public or private, is disallowed by us, that is in any way requisite for the due exertion of that ancient power of keys which Christ bestowed upon His Church. * * We do not debar men from opening their griefs unto the physician of their souls, either for their better information in the true state of their disease; or for the quieting of their troubled conscience, or for receiving further direction from them, out of God’s Word, or for the recovery of their present sickness; and the prevention of the like danger in the time to come.”

HENRY HAMMOND.—PRIEST.

Born 1606. Archdeacon of Chichester 1643.

Quotes the exhortation preparatory to the Holy Communion.

On the Power of the Keys. munion (vid. p. 1,) and adds, "These words are a fervent exhortation to all, to seek out and make use of those auxiliaries: (Confession and Absolution) which, whosoever in that case shall neglect, will be guilty of great unkindness to his own soul, and may well be thought to have betrayed it to a great and needless danger. * * For when a discreet and learned Minister having had survey of my soul—the cognizance of my offence first, and then of my repentance—shall, from the Word of God, give me assurance that my estate is good, and thereupon, pronounce me absolved from all my sins, this will seal me a right of God's promise of forgiveness, as it were, solemnly and in court."

Prac. Catech. Lib. I. sec. 3. "We ought to confess to Presbyters, because if our sins be against God, then our confession of them to His Ministers can be in no way improper, but in some kind necessary to him who desires their absolution. * * For the cure of sin, it will sure be very profitable to advise with others, especially physicians of the soul, how and by what means this cure may be wrought; how a raging sin may be subdued, and the occasion to it avoided: to which end alone, the disclosing of the particular state is more than profitable. Again, it may tend much to my comfort, when another, whose office it is, upon a strict survey and shrift of my former life, and present testification of my repentance, may, upon good grounds, give me absolution.

THOMAS WILSON.—BISHOP.

Born 1663. Bishop of Sodor and Man 1697. Died 1755.

Parochialia.
On Conf. and
Abs.

“ Our Lord having purchased the forgiveness of sins for all mankind, hath committed the ministry of reconciliation to us; that having brought men to repentance, we may in Christ’s Name, and in the Person of Christ, pronounce their pardon. * *. As

Lev. xiv.

under the law of Moses God made His Priests the judges of Leprosy—so now under the Gospel, hath He given His Priests authority to judge of sin, which is the leprosy of the soul. He hath given them rules to judge by, with authority to pronounce pardon to the qualified, for this is their commission from Christ’s own mouth. *Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted*—therefore are we bound to encourage penitents earnestly to desire absolution.”

In “Steps
to the Altar.”
App. II.

“ If my sins give me great disturbance of mind, I will not only confess them to God, but I will apply to some one of those Pastors whom God hath appointed to be the ministers of reconciliation between God and man: to him I will open my case and my grief: I will take his ghostly counsel and direction; and when he judges my repentance to be sincere, according to the rules of the Gospel, I will beg of him to give me Absolution; for sure, sure those words of Jesus Christ were not so often repeated to no purpose—*Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them*. I will, therefore, faithfully believe, that it will be unto me according to this word.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.—BISHOP.

Born about 1605. Fellow of All Souls, Oxon. 1636. Chaplain to Charles the Martyr 1642.—Bishop of Down and Connor, and Privy Counsellor 1661.—Died 1667.

Advice to
his Clergy.
Art. 68.

“Let every Minister exhort his people to frequent confession of their sins, and a declaration of the state of their souls.”

Guide to the
Penitent.
Sec. II.

“Besides examination of your conscience, which may be done in secret between God and your own soul, there is great use of holy confession; which though it be not generally and in all cases peremptorily commanded, yet you are advised by the Church under whose discipline you live, that before you are to receive the holy sacraments, or when you are visited with any dangerous sickness; if you find any one particular sin, or more, that lies heavy upon you, to disburden yourself of it into the bosom of your Confessor, who not only stands between God and you to pray for you, but hath the power of the keys committed to him, upon your true repentance to absolve you in Christ's Name, from those sins which you have confessed to him. And having made choice of a Confessor, you are advised plainly and sincerely to open your heart to him; and that, laying aside all considerations of any personal weakness in him, you are to look upon him only as he is a trustee from God, and commissioned by Him, as His ministerial deputy, to hear, and judge, and absolve you.”

Holy Living.
Cap. IV. Sec.
9, 5.

“Every true penitent is obliged to confess his sins, * * in which, because we may be very much helped if we take in the assistance of a spiritual Guide; therefore the Church of God hath com-

manded, and in most ages enjoined,* that we confess our sins, and discover the state and condition of our souls, to such persons as we, or our superiors judge fit to help us in such needs. For so, if we *confess our sins one to another* as S. James advises, we shall obtain the prayers of the holy man whom God and the Church hath appointed solemnly to pray for us: and when he knows our needs he can best minister comfort or reproof, oil or causticks: he can determine your cases of conscience, and judge better for you, than you do for yourself; and the shame of opening such ulcers may restrain your forwardness to contract them, and all these circumstances of advantage will do very much towards the forgiveness. And it were well if this duty were practised prudently and innocently in order to public discipline, or private comfort and instruction.—He is careful of his eternal interest that will not lose the advantage of using a private Guide and Judge.—*He that hideth his sins shall not prosper (non dirigitur saith the Vulgate, he shall want a guide,) but whoso confesseth his sins, and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.*"

Prov. xxviii.
13.

CHARLES WHEATLY.—PRIEST.

Born 1686. Vicar of Furneux Pelham 1728. Died 1742.

Commentary
on Common
Prayer. Cap.
XI. Sec. 4.

"We may, I presume, wish, very consistently with the determination of our Church, that our people would apply themselves oftener than they do, to their spiritual physicians, even in their time of health:

* S. Basil. Reg. Brev. 228. Conc. Lao. l. c. 2. Conc. Quin. Sext. c. 102. Tert. de Poen. passim. v. 16.

since it is much to be feared that they are wounded oftener than they complain; and yet, through aversion from disclosing the sore, suffer it to gangrene, for want of their help who should work the cure.

But present ease is not the only benefit the penitent may expect from the Confessor's aid: he will be better assisted in the regulation of his life: and when the last conflict shall approach, the holy man, being no stranger to the state of his soul, will be better able to guide and conduct it through all difficulties that may oppose."

AUTHOR OF THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

Published with the Letter of warmest approval from Dr. Henry Hammond.

Whole Duty,
Serm. 3, Sec.
21.

"For want of (obeying the exhortation before Communion,) many have run into very great mischief, having let doubt fester so long that it hath either plunged them into deep distress of conscience; or what is worse they have, to still that disquiet within them, betaken themselves to all sinful pleasures, and so quite cast off all care of their souls.

"But it will perhaps be said that Confession cannot be made without discovering the nakedness and blemishes of the soul, and there is shame in that, and therefore men are unwilling to do it. But, if indeed there were shame in it, yet as long as it may be a means to cure both your trouble and your sin too, that shame ought to be despised, and it is sure it would, if we loved our souls as well as our bodies. For, in bodily diseases, be they never so foul or shameful,

we account him a fool, who will rather miss the cure than discover them; and then it must here be so much greater folly, by how much the soul is more precious than the body."

HERBERT THORNDIKE.—PRIEST.

Born 1600. Proctor of Cambridge 1638; afterwards Prebend of Westminster. Died 1672.

Epilogue,
B. III. c. 9. "God having provided the means of procuring and assuring the pardon of sin by the Church, hath also obliged all Christians to make use of the same, by bringing their secret sins to the knowledge of the Church. * * Seeing then that God hath provided the ministry of the Church for such purpose, and that no reason can presume, that all Christians will either know or supply to themselves the work and effect of that ministry, it followeth, that though voluntary Penance is not necessary for the obtaining remission of *every* sin; yet it is necessary for the *body* of the Church, because *there is no ground of presumption* that the sins thereof can be cleansed without it."

Epilogue,
B. III. p. 104. "I most freely glorify God by freely professing that in my judgment, no Christian kingdom or state can maintain itself to be that which it pretendeth, more effectually, than by giving force and effect to the law of Private Confession once a year."

JEREMY COLLIER.—BISHOP.

Born 1650. Bishop in 1713. Died 1726.

Ecc. Hist.
Part II. lib. iv. "Can we imagine that words so plain (whose-soever sins, &c.) in the expression, and so solemn

in the occasion, are void of weight and signification? Not to mention the right they imply of admitting into the Church, and excluding from it, not to mention that, they must amount to this meaning at lowest, that those who neglect this ordinance of God and refuse to apply to persons thus authorized, shall not have their sins forgiven though otherwise not unqualified."

And again holding with Erasmus, that "The making a discovery of our lives, opening our minds, and laying even our thoughts before a Priest, must be a mortifying exercise, and cannot be done without some conquest upon pride," (which he just before proves to be the main parent of sins.) "Now the shame of repeating this discipline makes a man more guarded in his practice, and is a preservative against relapse. Besides, the Penitent by laying the state of his conscience before a Priest, is better acquainted with the degrees of his guilt, and the dangers of his mis-carriage."

Ed. fol. Lon.
1714. p. 247.

THOMAS RATTRAY.—BISHOP.

Born 1687. Bishop of Dunkeld 1727. Primus Ecc. Scot. 1739.
Died 1743.

After a full and severe description of Penitence, of the necessity of contrition, mortification, &c. &c., he adds, "And moreover, they ought to apply to a pious and judicious Priest, and confess their sin, and lay open the state of their souls to him; that they may be assisted by his counsel and advice, and sacerdotal intercession for them."

Instruct. on
Christian Co-
venant, p. 304.

ANTHONY SPARROW.—BISHOP.

Born 1620. Bishop of Exeter 1667. Bishop of Norwich 1678. Died 1685.

Sermon on
Confession.
pp. 14, 15.

“Our Confession must be *integra et perfecta*, not by halves; all our sins must be confessed, *omnia venialia, omnia mortalia*, God alone blots out our sins; true! but there is another confessor that would not be neglected; he who would be sure of pardon, let him find a Priest, and make his humble confession to him, God having delegated Priests, His judges here on earth, and given them the power of absolution, so that they can forgive the sins of those who humbly confess to them. Heaven waits, and expects the Priests’ sentence here, ‘and what the servant binds or looses, the Lord confirms in Heaven.’ ”

 JOHN DOVE.—DOCTOR.

A. D. 1597.

Innovations
unjustly charged,
p. 557.

“To advise the use of private confession to the Priest, is no Popish innovation, but agreeable to the constant practice of this Church. And if any call it auricular, because private and in the Priest’s ear, I know not why they should be condemned of Popery.”

CERTAIN ARGUMENTS TO MOVE US TO CONFESSION.

From Bishop J. Taylor.

“ 1. That God hath made a special promise
 Prov. xxviii. 13. to confession of sins. *Whoso confesseth his sins,
 and forsaketh them, shall have mercy, and If
 1 John i. 9. we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to
 forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighte-
 ousness.*”

“ 2. That when the Jews being warned by the sermons
 of the Baptist, repented of their sins, they con-
 fessed their sins unto S. John in the susception
 Matt. iii. 6. of Baptism.

“ 3. That the converts in the days of the Apostles,
 turning to Christianity, instantly declared their
 Acts xix. 18. faith and repentance, by confession and declara-
 tion of their deeds.

“ 4. That Confession is an act of many virtues put
 together:—the gate of repentance:—an instrument of shame
 and condemnation of our sins:—a glorification
 Josh. vii. 19. of God, and an acknowledgment of His justice
 in punishing:—for by confessing our sins, we do
 confess His justice, and are assessors with God, in this con-
 demnation of ourselves.

“ 5. That by such an act of judging our-
 selves, we shall escape the more angry judgment
 of God.
 1 Cor. xi. 31.

“ 6. That confession of sin is so necessary a duty, that
 in all Scriptures it is the immediate preface to pardon and
 the certain consequent of a godly sorrow.

“ 7. That in all ages of the Gospel, it hath been taught
 and practised.

“ 8. That by this instrument those whose office it is, can best apply remedies to every spiritual sickness.

“ 9. It is by all Churches esteemed a necessary duty in cases of troubled conscience : and what is in one case necessary, and in all convenient, is fit to be done by all persons.

“ 10. That Confession being in order to pardon, it must be made where the pardon of sin is administered, namely, to the Ministers of God.

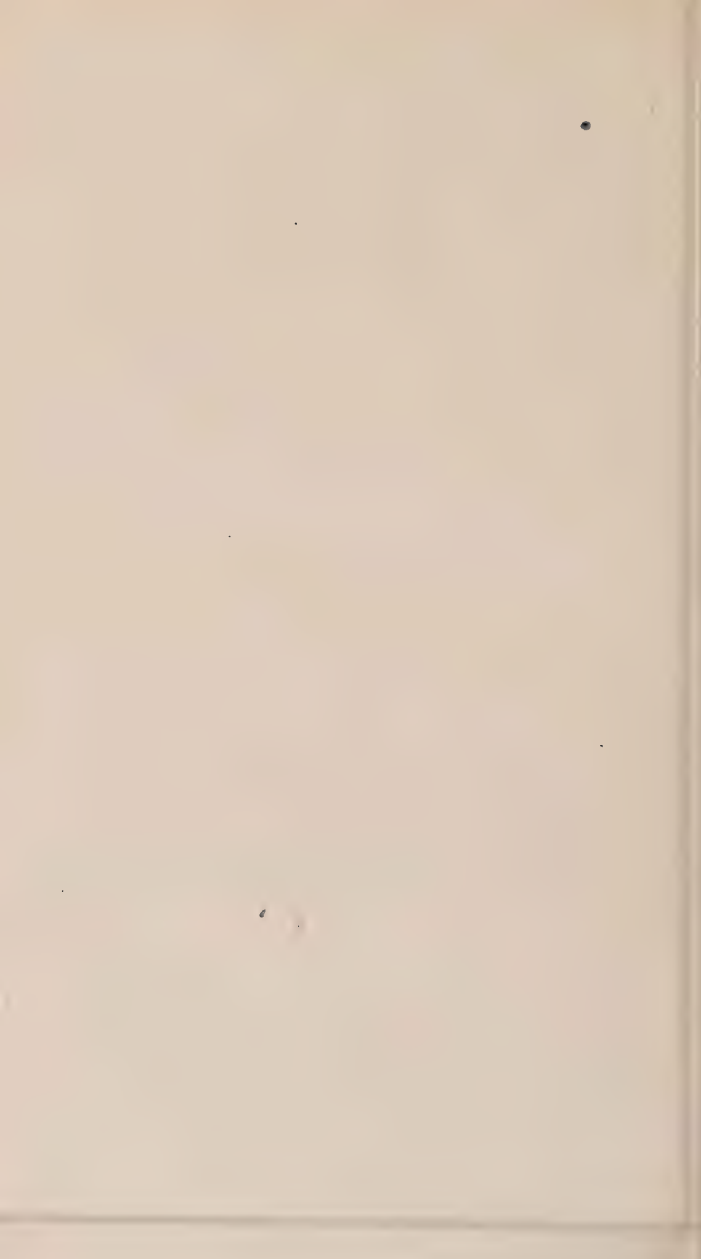
“ 11. That the Ministers of the Gospel are ministers of reconciliation ; and must know the fault before they can heal it.

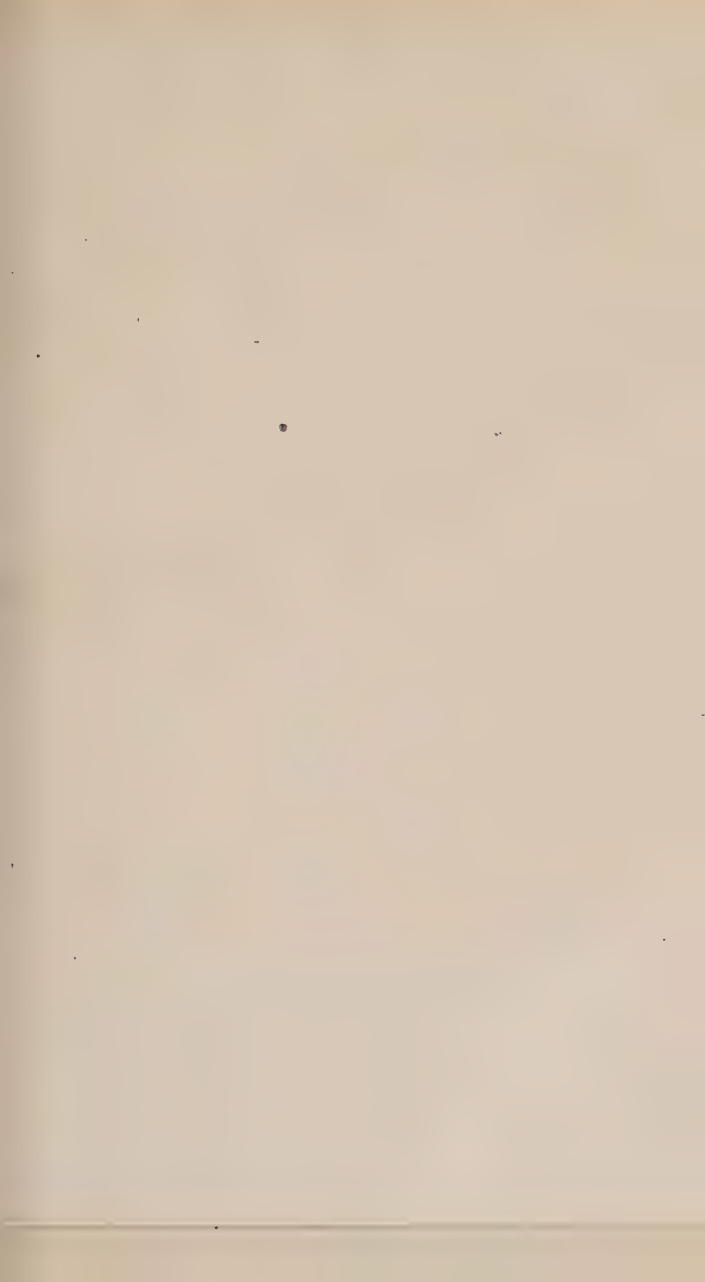
“ 12. Shame most hinders us, but better be ashamed here than confounded hereafter.

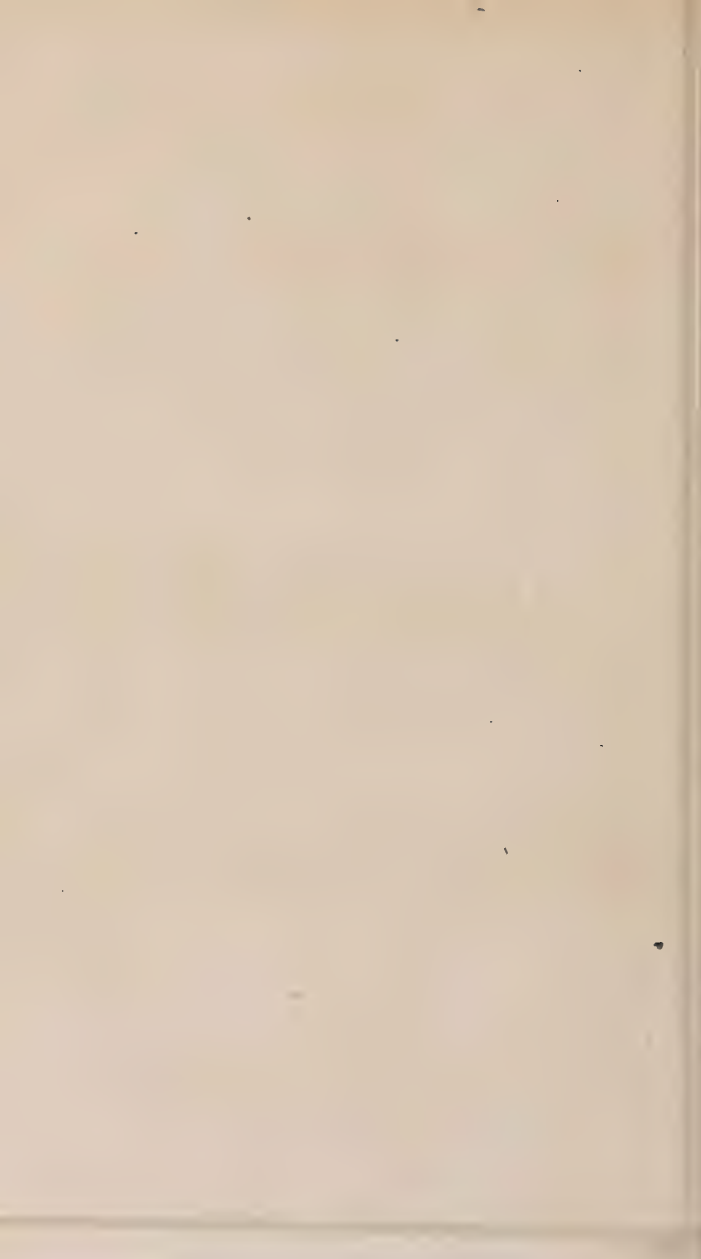
“ GLORY BE TO GOD.”

NOTE.

ALL quotations not taken immediately from their authors, are accredited to the Books wherein they were found. They are but three or four in number. The “ Reasons ” from Jeremy Taylor (p. 11,) are condensed, but otherwise unaltered ; and in no instance has any thing been omitted that could possibly change the sense, or for any other reason than a desire to be as brief as possible.







7
V O I C E

OF

The Protestant Episcopal Church

IN THE

UNITED STATES,

ON

C O N F E S S I O N .

With an Appendix.

I said, I will confess my transgressions UNTO THE LORD, and THOU forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—PSALMS xxxii. 5.

“Go, shew thyself to the priest.”—They do allege this saying of the Saviour to prove Auricular Confession to stand on God's word; do they not see that the Leper was cleansed from his leprosy, BEFORE he was by Christ sent unto the priest, to shew himself unto him.—*Second Part of Homily on Repentance.*

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THE VOICE
OF THE
Protestant Episcopal Church in the United
States, on Confession.

A Tract of 16 pages duodecimo, has lately made its appearance with the title—" *The Voice of the Anglican Church on Confession.*"* One of the Bishops of our Church is reputed to be the Editor, and it is said to be the precursor of several discourses, which are soon to emanate from the same quarter in favor of Auricular Confession. This Tract is made up of several quotations from the *Anglican* rather than from the *American Prayer Book*, and from the writings of *Anglican*, not *American Divines*. The object of this compilation, or *little courier*, may be inferred from the following quotations, from p. 14 :—

ANTHONY SPARROW.—BISHOP.

Born 1620. Bishop of Exeter 1667. Bishop of Norwich 1678.
Died 1685.

SERMON ON CONFESSION.—pp. 14, 15.

"Our Confession must be *integra et perfecta*, not by halves ; all our sins must be confessed, *omnia venialia, omnia mortalia*, God alone blots out our sins ; true !

* "The Voice of the Anglican Church on Confession. Edited by the Bishop of North Carolina.—Price 6 cts. Stanford & Swords."

but there is another confessor that would not be neglected; he who would be sure of pardon, let him find a Priest, and make his humble confession to Him, God having delegated Priests, His judges here on earth, and given them the power of absolution, so that they can forgive the sins of those who humbly confess to them. Heaven waits, and expects the Priests' sentence here, 'and what the servant binds or looses, the Lord confirms in Heaven.'"

JOHN DOVE.—DOCTOR.

A. D. 1597.

'INNOVATIONS UNJUSTLY CHARGED.—p. 557.

"To advise the use of private confession to the Priest, is no Popish innovation, but agreeable to the constant practice of this Church. And if any call it auricular, because private and in the Priest's ear, I know not why they should be condemned of Popery."

Now, granting that the writer of this Tract has quoted accurately from the Anglican Book,—supposing besides, (which is a very broad supposition,) that Anglican Divines *all speak the same voice, walk by the same rule, and would, if they could, compass the same thing—auricular confession*—we ask, "what is it to us, Protestant Episcopalians of these United States?" We take up our Prayer Book; we open the works of our divines, some of whom have been gathered to their rest, and where do we find a response? No where. There is "neither voice nor any that regarded." But on the contrary, they lift up a voice of no uncertain sound against a practice truly designated by one of them, "that abomination of desolation." And now for the proofs.

1. We shall take up the two Prayer Books, Anglican and American, and arrange the evidence in op

posite columns. With respect to the latter, let these pregnant passages from its preface be borne in mind :

“ When in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included, and the different religious denominations of Christians in these States were left at full and equal liberty to model and organise their respective churches, and forms of worship and discipline, in such manner as they might judge most convenient for their future prosperity, consistently with the Constitution and laws of their country.”

Again :—

“ But while these alterations were in review before the Convention, they could not but with gratitude to God, embrace the happy occasion which was offered to them, (uninfluenced and unrestrained by any worldly authority whatsoever,) to take a further review of the public service, and to establish such other alterations and amendments therein as might be deemed expedient.”

It will be noted, that the portions marked in brackets are the 'only quotations given in the above Tract from the English book, with one exception.

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AMERICAN VOICE.

COMMUNION OFFICE.

Exhortation preparatory to the Holy Communion.

“ And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience ; therefore, [if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own con-

Exhortation preparatory to the Holy Communion.

“ And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience ; therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own con-

ANGLICAN VOICE.

science, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice,] to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

VISITATION OF THE SICK.

¶ *Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the Priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it after this sort.*

[ABSOLUTION IN OFFICE OF VISITATION OF THE SICK.

"Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by His au-

AMERICAN VOICE.

science herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other Minister of God's word, and open his grief; that he may receive such Godly counsel and advice, as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness."

☞ The words omitted are: "that by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution."

¶ *Then shall the Minister examine, whether he repent him truly of his sins, and be in charity with all the world; exhorting him to forgive, from the bottom of his heart, all persons that have offended him; and if he hath offended any other, to ask them forgiveness; and where he hath done injury or wrong to any man, that he make amends to the uttermost of his power. And if he hath not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his debts, what he oweth, and what is owing unto him, for the better discharging of his con-*

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AMERICAN VOICE.

thority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”]

¶ And then the Priest shall say the Collect following.

Let us pray.

O, most merciful God,
&c.

science, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health.

¶ *The Exhortation before rehearsed may be said before the Minister begin his Prayer, as he shall see cause.*

¶ *The Minister shall not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability, to be liberal to the poor.**

¶ *And then the Minister shall say the Collect following.*

Let us pray.

O, most merciful God
&c.

* We quote here the following note from Bishop Brownell's Commentary on our Prayer Book, p. 473.

“After this Rubric follows another in the English office, recommending that the sick person make a ‘special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter,’ upon which the Priest is to ‘absolve him’ in a form which our reviewers have done well to reject. Com

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mentators have indeed given a construction to it, which may be tolerated, but in its most obvious acceptation, it is too nearly allied to those notions of absolution which have prevailed to such a mischievous extent in the Romish Church."—*T. C. Brownell.*

ORDINATION OFFICE.

¶ *When this prayer is done, the Bishop with the Priests present, shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of Priesthood; the Receivers humbly kneeling, and the Bishop saying:*

Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained: and be thou a faithful Dispenser of the word of God, and of His holy Sacraments: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall*

The American office is the same as the Anglican from the words: "When this prayer is done," and to "Amen." But then follows this form which the Anglican has not.

¶ *Or this:*

Take thou authority to execute the office of a Priest in the Church of God now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands; and be thou a faithful Dispenser of the word of God, and of His holy Sacraments: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall*

ANGLICAN VOICE.

deliver to every one of them kneeling, the Bible into his hand, saying:

Take thou authority to preach the word of God, &c. (As in the American.)

The quotation in the Tract above mentioned stands thus :

ORDINAL OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH.

[“Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven : and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.”]

AMERICAN VOICE.

deliver to every one of them kneeling, the Bible into his hand, saying:

Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the Congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.

Let us proceed to an authority which is the same in both Churches,—THE HOMILIES. Here is a passage as clear as light :—

“When thou offerest thine offering at the altar, if thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thine offering, and go and be reconciled ; and when thou art reconciled, come and offer thine offering. It may also be thus taken, that we ought to confess our weakness and infirmities one to another ; to the end, that knowing each other’s frailness, we may the more earnestly pray together unto Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, that He will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for His Son, Jesus Christ’s sake, and not to impute them unto us, when He shall render to every man according to his works. And whereas, the adversaries go about to

wrest this place for to maintain their auricular confession withal, they are greatly deceived themselves, and do shamefully deceive others; for if this text ought to be understood of auricular confession, then the priests are as much bound to confess themselves unto the lay people, as the lay people are bound to confess themselves to them. And if to pray is to absolve, then the laity by this place hath as great authority to absolve the priests, as the priests have to absolve the laity. This did Johannes Scotus, otherwise called Duns, well perceive, who upon this place writeth on this manner: ‘Neither doth it seem unto me that James did give this commandment, or that he did set it forth as being received of Christ. For, first and foremost, whence had he authority to bind the whole Church, sith that he was only bishop of the Church at Jerusalem? Except thou wilt say that the same Church was at the beginning the head Church, and consequently that he was the head bishop, which thing the See of Rome will never grant,—the understanding of it then is as in these words: ‘Confess your sins one to another,’—a persuasion to humility, whereby he willeth us to confess ourselves generally to our neighbors, that we are sinners according to this saying: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. And where that they do allege this saying of our Saviour Jesus Christ unto the leper, to prove auricular confession to stand on God’s word, ‘Go thy way, and show thyself unto the priest,’ do they not see that the leper was cleansed from his leprosy, before he was by Christ sent unto the priest for to show himself unto him? By the same reason we must be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy; I mean our sins must be forgiven us before we come to confession. What need we then to tell forth our sins in the ear of the priest, sith that they be already taken away? Therefore, holy Ambrose, in his second sermon upon the hundred and nineteenth psalm, doth say full well: Go show thyself unto the priest; who is the true priest, but He which is the priest forever, after the order of Melchisedech?

Whereby this holy father doth understand, that both the priesthood and the law being changed, we ought to acknowledge none other priest for deliverance from our sins, but our Saviour Jesus Christ, who being Sovereign Bishop, doth with the sacrifice of His body and blood, offered once for ever upon the altar of the cross, most effectually cleanse the spiritual leprosy, and wash away the sins of all those that with true confession of the same do flee unto Him. It is most evident and plain, that this auricular confession hath not His warrant of God's word; else it had not been lawful for Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, upon a just occasion, to have put it down. For, when anything ordained of God is by the lewdness of men abused, the abuse ought to be taken away, and the thing itself suffered to remain. Moreover, these are St. Augustine's words: What have I to do with men, that they should hear my confession, as though they were able to heal my diseases? A curious sort of men to know another man's life, and slothful to correct and amend their own. Why do they seek to hear of me what I am, which will not hear of thee what they are? And how can they tell, when they hear of me by myself, whether I tell the truth or not, sith that no mortal man knoweth what is in man, but the spirit of man which is in him. Augustine would not have written thus, if auricular confession had been used in his time."—*Second Part of Homily on Repentance.*

II. We may now turn to the writings of a few of our own Divines.

I.—BISHOP WHITE,

ON THE ORDINATION SERVICE.—Memoirs of the Church.—p. 203. Philadelphia edit. 1820.

"The alterations in the Ordinal were prepared by the Bishops. There was no material difference of opinion, except in regard to the words used by the Bishop at the ordination of Priests—'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' and 'whose sins thou dost forgive, they

are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.' Bishop Seabury, who alone was tenacious of this form, consented at last, with great reluctance, to allow the alternative of another as it now stands. The objections to the use made of the aforesaid expressions, (the author here speaks his own sense only, not answering for that of any other Bishop) were as follow :—

“As to the first; ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ it is supposed to express the conveyance of the ministerial character which St. Paul recognises as the gift of the spirit. 1. Tim: 4, 14, and 2. Tim. 1, 6: and Eph. 4: 8, 11. And as to the expressions, ‘whose sins, &c.,’ he (i. e. the Bishop) supposes it to relate, according to the intention of the service, principally, under due regulation, to the power of passing ecclesiastical censures, and of releasing from them; and partly to the declaring of the forgiveness of sins, repented of and forsaken; such forgiveness not to apply, independently on the sincerity of the receiver. But although each of the expressions will thus admit of a good interpretation, which should be given by the clergy as occasion may call for it; yet the words are not necessarily to be used in preference to every other form, in the very act of conveying the ministerial commission. If they are not necessary, they cannot be so proper in the place in which they stand as some other words of more obvious signification. There seems the less reason to stickle for the last of the two clauses, as it was not of very early use in the Church.”

II.—BISHOP WHITE,

ON FORGIVENESS OF SINS.—Lectures on the Catechism.
Philadelphia. 1813.—p. 43.

“The design of these Lectures requires, that there should be pointed out where, and on what grounds, our Church differs from the Church of Rome, on the present subject. That Church exacts, as the condition of the forgiveness of sin, confession to a Priest. We

find no authority for this in scripture. The passage on which the Council of Trent has principally rested this matter is (John 20: 23,) “whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Here it is said is a power of loosing and binding; and it cannot be exercised without a special knowledge of the sins which are the objects of the power. The error is partly grounded on the not distinguishing between the sinner and the sin. It is not said, *whatsoever sins*, but *whosoever sins* ye remit. There may be satisfactory evidence of penitence, even where there is not a minute disclosure of all the delinquencies to which it has a relation. Further if we were to admit the passage in proof of the priestly power, it would not follow that the penitent is under an obligation to resort to it. He might still, for anything that appears, repair to the original source of pardon; as in the case of a rebellious subject, who should have immediate recourse to his prince, instead of applying to another person under a commission. But it is conceived, that the passage principally relates to the binding under ecclesiastical censures, and to the releasing from them. When these acts take place in the due administration of ecclesiastical discipline, the Great Master ratifies what is done in His name, and by virtue of His authority. But even in this line, what may be the effect of error or of passion, must be foreign to every fair construction of the text; and much less can we conceive of the Searcher of hearts, as admitting to a share in the exercise of His prerogative a succession of frail, and in some instances, sinful men, who cannot of themselves look beyond the conduct; who may be imposed on not only by an imperfect or by a false confession; but even where no deception is intended, and in consequence of men’s imperfect knowledge of their own hearts. By writers on the present subject, there are cited other passages of Scripture, which speak of the confession of sins. But in no one of them is there an injunction to confess to a minister, authorised to apply the grant of pardon in any other way than in that of release from ecclesiastical censure.

III.—BISHOP GRISWOLD.

OF AURICULAR CONFESSION.—Work on the Reformation. Boston. 1843.—p. 67.

“The next Article which I would mention, is what is called Auricular Confession. The Roman Church makes it imperative on all her members to confess their sins to a priest,—a practice which, like most of their other distinctive principles, adds very much to the power and wealth of their priesthood. It is not only fitting, but the duty of Christians, to *confess their sins one to another*—especially to those whom they have injured, that they may make restitution, and obtain forgiveness; and also to confess such faults and offences as others have a right to know. But there are many secrets which, though they may be connected with what in God’s sight is sinful, had better not be known to man. And that laymen are bound to confess to priests, any more than priests to laymen, no good reason, nor divine authority, can be given.”

Bishop Griswold then proceeds—pp, 67, 68—to point out the practical effects of the Roman Auricular Confession, and observes:—

“That men should be willing that such questions should be put to their wives, and sisters, and young daughters in the confessional, as are found even in the published rules of that Church, have seemed to me strange and astonishing. One who had been educated among the Papists, says, ‘I learned (in the confessional) more sins than ever I had heard of when conversant in the world.’ What effect many of the questions which are known to be put to females must have on the priests themselves, may easily be imagined. That the people of this our free country should have such awakened suspicions and fears of the private meetings of the people called Freemasons, who are *men* only, and they respectable members of society, mingling with the community in all the affairs of life, and yet manifest such apathy respecting the secret

the confessional, and of men and women wholly retired from the view of the world, has long to me seemed unaccountable."

Our fourth quotation ought certainly to have great weight in the quarter from whence the Voice of the Anglican Church is said to have come. We quote—

IV.—BISHOP HOBART.

His charge of 1819. "THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCHMAN STATED AND EXPLAINED, IN DISTINCTION FROM THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME." &c.—p. 25

"The Churchman only considers a general absolution as an edifying and consolatory part of the public service. The Church of Rome makes auricular confession—the private confession to the priest, by every individual, of all his sins of thought, word, and deed—an indispensable condition of forgiveness. *The Churchman justly deems auricular confession, and private absolution, an encroachment on the rights of conscience—an invasion of the prerogative of the Searcher of hearts—and, with some exceptions, hostile to domestic and social happiness, and licentious and corrupting in its tendency.*"

Such we hold to be the Voice of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country on Confession. The authority of her Liturgy and Standards, and the weighty admonitions of her Fathers who have entered into rest, must surely carry much more weight than the opinions of Anthony Sparrow, Bishop; John Dove, Doctor, and others like-minded. Let us be content to be ranked among the "wicked" or the "despisers of dignities," when we flee from another and a strange "Voice," advocating "a practice utterly unknown to the primitive Church—one of the

most fearful abuses of that of Rome, and the source of unspeakable abominations.”—(Blomfield, Bishop of London, 1842.) And, like the deaf adder, let every true Protestant Episcopalian stop his ears, and refuse to hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. “This bird,” says Bishop Hall, speaking of secret confession to a priest, “was hatched in the Council of Lateran, 1215, and fully plumed in the Council of Trent.” The lovers of Oxford theology, we may add, have *gathered her eggs* for an American soil, where a new brood shall *move the wing*, and *open the mouth*, and *peep*, (Isa. 10,) over what they esteem as angel’s food, but which will surely send *leanness into the soul*. O, my soul, come not *thou* into their secret—unto their assembly, *mine honor*, be not thou united.

Appendix.

ON "THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN."

[From Bishop White's Lectures, p. 232.]

AURICULAR CONFESSION.

In the lecture, remarks were made on the power to remit or to retain sins, as given in John xx. 23. The other passages quoted in favor of Auricular Confession are Acts xix. 18, and James v. 16. In the former it is recorded, that on St. Paul's first preaching and performing of miraculous works in Corinth, "many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds." It means no more, than that their application to the apostles to be received to Christian communion, was accompanied by an acknowledgment of their former vicious courses: a matter not uncommon in every Protestant communion at the present day. But that a special confession of all past miscarriages was not a pre-requisite of initiation into the Church by baptism, may be presumed from the many places in which it might otherwise have been expected to appear,—as in the baptism of the eunuch,—in that of Cornelius and his household, and in that of Jairus and his household. The other passage is,—“Confess your sins one to another,”—it is not to a priest, as having an authoritative and judicial tribunal; but to one another—meaning with candor, in opposition to the palliating or justifying of what was faulty in their respective characters. For that the passage went beyond this, to a disclosure of the movements of the mind, does not appear.

On the present subject, the works of the early fathers have received a similar treatment with the Holy Scriptures: that is, the absolute duty of confession to God, and the occasional use of

opening the heart to the ministers of His word, has been confounded with the indispensable necessity of the latter, as a condition of Divine pardon. Thus, Tertullian is introduced as to the purpose; because in his Treatise concerning Patience, among many animated exhortations to persons fallen from the peace of the Church, he counsels them to implore, on bended knees, the prayers of the Presbyters, and of all others who were dear to God. Cyprian and Origen are quoted to the same effect, and on similar occasion given. But on the other hand, it would be easy to bring passages from the fathers, from St. Chrysostom in particular, in various passages of his works prescribing confession to God in such a way as to show that they thought no other necessary to the pardon of sin. Even in the legitimate releasing from Church censures, there are sundry fathers who maintain that the act of the minister is not judicial, but declaratory. The doctrine of Auricular Confession originated in the following manner:—after the lapse of some centuries, sins of a public and glaring character were acknowledged openly before the Church, and this practice, with the advantage which it was thought to possess of securing the prayers of the clergy and of all the faithful, drew after it the unveiling of transgressions, which could be known only to the parties: but confessed by them voluntarily, and not drawn from them on the ground of duty. The inconvenience was perceived in its bringing forward of some facts which induced great scandal on religion; of which a signal instance is on record as happening in Constantinople, under the episcopacy of Nectarius. In consequence of this he abolished public confession within his diocese. Out of the ashes of that practice, arose the other of private confession as a general duty; but it grew by degrees, and was not enjoined by any of the councils called “general,” until that of the Lateran, in the thirteenth century. Even then it rested as a matter of discipline, and was not affirmed as of divine commandment, until so declared by the Council of Trent.

It would be easy to recite from ancient fathers exhortations to repentance under a variety of circumstances, and expressed in such forms as show that they are materially defective, if Auricular Confession, so evidently wanting in them, were thought universally a duty. There shall be given the instance of the Roman Clement, undoubtedly the person referred to in Phillip. iv. 3, as

having "his name written in the book of life." In his admirable Epistle to the Corinthians, written for the express purpose of reclaiming them from a schism—after having set before them the heinousness of their offence, he exhorts them to beg God's forgiveness; enlarging on the sentiment without any intimation of a preparatory step of Auricular Confession. This, if required, might also have been pertinently introduced in another place, where he admonishes those who had laid the first foundation of the schism, to submit themselves to their presbyters, and be instructed to repentance, bending the knees of their hearts. It may be alleged that confession was an appendage to the repentance to which they were to be instructed. But this is the matter in question; and it is contended that the general requisition of such a condition would naturally have introduced the mention of it in this place. The Corinthians, it is true, in the very return from their schism, must have acknowledged their fault therein. But it is easy to perceive the difference between this, and the disclosure of the heart implied in the subject under consideration.

The same inference may be drawn from the Second Epistle of St. Clement; if it be indeed his, and not rather, as some think, erroneously ascribed to him, although confessedly very ancient. Be this as it may, we have there an earnest exhortation to repentance, without a word concerning the necessity of confession to a minister.

But there is no reason to confine to the first three centuries what is here affirmed of the sense of the fathers. Those of the fourth century were equally strangers to the doctrine in question. Especial stress should be laid on the evidences of this, found in the writings of St. Chrysostom; who succeeding Nectarius in the see of Constantinople, may be expected to have spoken with a reference to the lately abrogated confession in public; but not without regard to the private confession had there been any such. How far he was from this, may be perceived in the following extract from his thirty-first homily on the Epistle to the Hebrews,—“He who hath sinned, is certainly an object of mercy and clemency. But as for you who are not persuaded of this, how do you suppose it possible that you should obtain mercy? Why do you bear yourself with so much confidence? Let us be persuaded that we have sinned. Let us say it, not only with our tongue, but also in mind

and thought. Let us not only say that we are sinners, but review our sins, numbering them especially and one by one. I do not say to you, that you are to make an ostentatious display of them, but that you should obey the prophet, saying, "confess your way unto the Lord. To God, to the Judge, confess your sins, praying, if not with tongue, at least with the memory. And so pray that he may have mercy on you."

There might be made numerous quotations from the same father, to the same effect.

The evils to which the assumed power may lead, and to which it has been confessedly abused in some places, is a matter of very serious consideration. For although legitimate power is liable to abuse, yet in proportion as any asserted right has been known to extend to the corrupting of the consciences of individuals, to the invading of domestic comforts, and to the producing of disturbances in States, the greater should be the caution of looking well to the authority which is said to sustain a claim so easily made the engine of ambition, and the cover of licentiousness. It is reported of the secret intercourse in question, that it has been sometimes the means of preventing and of redressing wrongs, which would have eluded the instructions of the pulpit. That these also have the same effect, becomes sometimes known to those who are happily the means of accomplishing it; which gives ground of hope, that it takes place on other occasions known only to the parties. So far, however, as private confession increases this good, it should be put into the balance against the immensely disproportionate mass of evil.

Among these is the granting of indulgences, as a release from penalties inflicted in penance, and from punishment due in another world, for the non-payment of them in the present. The abuses in the issuing of indulgences is not denied by any; and if it be pleaded that they may be administered with discretion, it is at present to the purpose merely to state that every Christian should look well to the foundation on which so great a superstition has been confessedly erected.

ON CONFESSION.

From "Romanism and Holy Scripture Compared," by Bishop Mant, one of the editors of Mant & D'Oyley's Family Commentary.)

"The preparation also required by the two churches (England and Rome) respectively, in order to the receiving of the Holy Sacrament, may be dismissed with few words. The injunction which imposes confession to a priest, is an arbitrary assumption of power by the Church of Rome, and has no warrant in the primitive Apostolical mode of celebrating the Communion. The exhortation by which the Church of England admonishes her members to self-examination is strictly conformable to St. Paul's precept (1. Cor. xi. 28.) At the same time confession of sins to God which she prescribes also, is a constant qualification for forgiveness, and especially suited to such an occasion; and what can be more unexceptionable than a voluntary application to some discreet minister of God's word for comfort and counsel on the part of those who cannot quiet their own conscience by self-examination; but at the same time what more different from the Romish Auricular Confession?

